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ABSTRACT

The national movement for educational reform that began in the 1980's has largely concentrated on improving the educational services provided to high school and preschool students. It is equally important to help elementary and middle school children and young adolescents at risk develop the social and basic academic skills needed to function at home, at school, and in the community. A study examined educational research and programs that have concentrated on coordinating public and private resources to help these students build these skills. The study resulted in eight recommendations. It was concluded that (1) program planners should concentrate on building leadership and social skills among middle grade students; (2) adult participants in programs involving young adolescents should be trained to understand the dynamics of early adolescent development and multicultural factors in attitudes and behavior; (3) children and youth at risk should not only be provided with a wide array of supportive services but should be afforded opportunities to provide services to others as well; and (4) public school systems serving high concentrations of high-risk youth should create policies encouraging maximum flexibility and responsibility for decision making at the school building level. (Document includes eight pages of references.) (MN)

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Building the Watertable of Youth Employability: Collaboration to Support Children And Youth at Risk Between Ages Nine and Fifteen

Richard A. Lacey

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Much of any light this report sheds on policy options is due to Mr. Crawford's early and broad understanding of the long-range economic and social implications underlying the activity in the field of education and employment occurring since 1980. I am also grateful for the advice and assistance, editorial and conceptual, of Patricia Bitney. Her questions and insights were invaluable in helping synthesize knowledge about policies and practices in education and employment.

Those understandings and insights, converge around strategies for increasing long-term employability of at-risk youth between ages nine to fifteen. This age group itself has never been clearly defined, and relatively little information has been gathered about it, yet this age group will surely preoccupy policy makers throughout the 1990s.

The contributions of the research staff of the management consulting firm of Pierce Kennedy Hearth, particularly Ms. Frances Cooke, brought richness and specificity to this analysis. Special thanks are due to Karen Joy, Mr. James Torrienti, and Ms. Elizabeth Tully.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The national movement for educational reform sustained during the 1980s has concentrated policy making and program development at two levels of public schooling. First, major reports directed at high school reform have led to higher academic standards generally, driven by policies for increased course requirements for grade promotion and for graduation, as well as longer school days and related measures. Second, policies are directing resources to pre-school years, with special attention to children at risk.

Policy makers will be responding to the many results, expected and unexpected, of initiatives into the 1990s, when the demographic effects of increasing percentages of disadvantaged and minority groups converge with pressures emanating from international economic competition, an aging American population, and costs of a structurally unemployable underclass.

Recommendations by the Committee for Economic Development (CED), Education Commission of the States, and other groups converge around increased attention to the older and younger levels of public schooling. In contrast, the recommendations in our analysis of priorities for children and youth at risk cluster around the years nine to fifteen. This is the period of schooling that has traditionally begun at fourth grade and has ended when adolescents are sophomores -- the point where most school dropouts occur.

This group -- elementary and middle grade children and young adolescents at risk -- is easily overlooked because of the more obvious priorities for the youngest children and high school students. The middle grade years have been described as a period of "growing up forgotten;" this is especially true for youngsters at risk, even as the attention of public and private sector leaders fixes upon educational reform.

Our analysis concentrates upon the need for coordinating public and private resources to build the social and basic academic skills of at-risk youngsters so that they can function effectively in a variety of settings, including family, school, the community, and among their peers. Our conclusion is that these skills are the foundation of reliable work habits and behaviors that will increasingly be required in the workplaces of the 21st century. The critically important time for building self-confidence, social and basic academic skills in a supportive rather than highly competitive environment is in pre-adolescence -- about age 11 or 12. A variety of experiences, including well-designed exposure to careers and workplaces, must build positive attitudes among youth whose disadvantages too often lead them to perceive no alternatives to negative decisions when crises bedevil them during adolescence.

The premise of this analysis is that resources directed primarily toward the youngest and older students at risk will be dissipated if the seven-year span from nine to fifteen is neglected. It is at age nine, fourth grade, that students are expected to use reading to acquire knowledge of subject matter content. If elementary students are not adequately supported in a variety of ways, starting with ability to read in fourth grade, the deleterious effects of multiple disadvantages from then into the first years of high school will overwhelm the gains made in earlier years. Furthermore, resources devoted to secondary school programs will be inordinately devoted to intensive remediation, behavior modification, and similar crisis-oriented efforts of dropout prevention and retrieval.

Several other reports, including three reports by CED, advocate public-private partnerships, usually between business and public schools, as a strategy for coordinating and focusing school reform, legislative advocacy for public schools (particularly at the state level), and strengthening the transition of youth between school and employment. Drawing upon conceptual studies, documentation of collaboration over time, descriptive analyses, interviews, and telephone and on-site interviews, our analysis emphasizes the complexities and demands upon all parties of public-private collaboration. Our conclusion urges caution in undertaking partnerships, especially if a goal is to foster employability of disadvantaged youngsters. Collaboration must be based on long-term, strong commitments at top levels of all participating institutions and should include the employment and training community, Private Industry Council and JTPA Service Delivery Area administrators. Collaborative planning and program development must be grounded in knowledge of lessons learned from other experiments in partnerships, both successful and unsuccessful.

Beginning with a discussion of the "rising tide of mediocrity" in A Nation At Risk, the 1983 report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, our report explores the topic of building employability through coordinating services for children and youth at risk between ages nine to fifteen. Eight recommendations flow from this analysis, concluding with an image that contrasts with the "rising tide of mediocrity" -- namely, building the water table of youth employability -- creating a capacity among various community institutions for reliable support through the ages of nine to fifteen.

The analysis concludes with eight recommendations to guide a confluence of public and private resources to support and prepare disadvantaged youth to build social and academic skills and self-confidence as they begin formal preparation for employability and postsecondary training or higher education.

Recommendation 1: Program planners should concentrate on building leadership and social skills among middle grade students, particularly at ages 11 to 14. These skills have direct application to their daily relationships with peers and adults and are essential for building the habits that assure employability and academic success in high school. Programs in every institution that deals with these youngsters should be designed and staffed to support youngsters in learning to apply effective problem-solving skills and strategies in diverse situations -- school, recreation, community service, family, and workplaces.

Program managers, especially those involved in public-private partnerships, should foster supportive programs for middle school youngsters at risk. Recreational and social programs, tutoring by employees, summer programs, pre-employment skills training, exposure to career opportunities, and provision of special incentives and rewards for attendance and satisfactory performance are all helpful. Our report provides several descriptions of programs of various sizes and types. Where programs are well-known, such as the Boston Compact, the discussion addresses special considerations that illuminate the larger theme.

Recommendation 2: Adult participants in programs involving young adolescents should be trained to understand the dynamics of early adolescent development and multicultural factors in attitudes and behavior. Education and training should be provided to educators as well as to parents, social service personnel, employees in businesses, and managers of employment and training programs.

Management of programs involving middle grade youngsters at risk should be designed around special developmental needs of this group.

Recommendation 3: Children and youth at risk should not only be provided with a wide array of supportive services, but should be afforded opportunities to provide services to others as well. School-based community service programs, social service agencies, and corporate social service programs should be expanded to target this age group in close coordination with teachers and counselors.

Recommendation 4: Public school systems that serve high concentrations of children and youth at risk should create policies that encourage maximum flexibility and responsibility for decision-making at the school building level. Above all, teachers should be provided time and resources for their own development and for planning and monitoring their work with at-risk youngsters.

Recommendation 5: Creative uses of JTPA funds (section 205 and the eight-percent provision) should be encouraged and expanded through intensive collaboration between JTPA and school officials. Collaborative activities should be designed to involve practitioners who deal directly with the at-risk youth themselves.

State officials should regularly convene groups of public-private sector planners, especially those that include the business community, to identify receptive Private Industry Councils, school systems, and individual school staffs that serve at-risk youngsters to conduct comprehensive planning and program development.

Recommendation 6: Title II-B funds that are currently restricted to summer employment should be made available to provide remediation and support services for the full year. Many promising programs for at-risk youth conducted with JTPA funds must cease or be privately funded as soon as the youth return to school. A matching funding requirement, as in the eight-percent provision, could be used to encourage collaborative planning and management of year-around programming.

Recommendation 7: Leaders of public-private collaboration must recognize and adapt to the extensive demands and complexities of partnerships aimed toward ambitious aims of human resource development, minority youth employment, and school improvement. Provision of sufficient time and resources for planning is essential -- particularly time.

Collaborative inter-sector planning must involve lower-echelon people, such as teachers and PIC staff at the earliest stages possible. Trainers, counselors, JTPA intake interviewers, and others, such as corporate employees, who will have direct responsibility for implementing plans, must be engaged in the formulation of programs for at-risk youngsters.

Recommendation 8: Programs should be conceived, developed and promoted around provision of maximum exposure to disadvantaged youngsters of options in careers, career paths, and lifetime learning. JTPA funding standards should not restrict participants in exemplary youth programs to students who seek immediate employment after graduation. Postsecondary education, including higher education, should be a legitimate option.

On the premise that disadvantaged youth should be aware of and be able to pursue a number of alternatives, programs that build employability skills should not communicate the message that higher education is a realistic option only for mainstream, economically advantaged students.

Planning should be conducted collaboratively with those who work closely with the youngsters themselves, such as teachers and social service agency staff. Innovative programs resulting from such planning that would increase the long-term educational, training and employment options for disadvantaged youth should be able to draw upon JTPA funds.

INTRODUCTION

The Theme of this Report

The central image in the 1983 alarm entitled A Nation At Risk was a deluge of water. The National Commission on Excellence in Education charged that a "rising tide of mediocrity" is eroding the "educational foundations of our society," namely the public schools. The image startled the public and helped to launch a national movement of "action for excellence." That phrase was the title of another major study, one that underscored fears throughout the business community that the mediocrity of American public school graduates threatens the nation's economic security in the international marketplace of the twenty-first century (Education Commission of the States, 1983).

This analysis will interpret that idea from other perspectives. Images can be interpreted in several ways, and many of them rely on value-laden meanings. One way to view the rising tide is to see erosion, but another view is that a rising tide of mediocrity should be cause to celebrate. Since the word "mediocrity" denotes "middle" or "average," we should applaud the "rising tide" as a sign that the average is improving! Isn't it a rising tide that lifts all the boats?

When policy makers interpret complex trends to guide decisions, the trick is knowing where to focus attention. In the late 1970s the steady decline in Scholastic Aptitude Test scores caused similar distress (College Entrance Examination Board, 1977). Since then, test scores have risen, but has learning improved, especially among those who are often shortchanged in schools? Has access to higher education improved? Harold Howe II remarked that the nation needs another drop in SAT scores, if that meant that more disadvantaged youngsters who score marginally are entering college.

Torrents of funding to improve schools suggests Shakespeare: "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune" (Julius Caesar:IV, iii, 217). A flow of recommendations for reform has become a river which has brought costs as well as benefits, flooding as well as irrigation. Can it be brought under control to address strategic issues in human resource development, notably for youth at risk?

Two distinct tributaries have fed the education reform river -- one, the high school reform efforts, the other improvement of pre-school and primary education. These streams have competed for the attention and resources of policymakers who try to direct irrigation for the nation's economic, social and cultural fertility. Policymakers are focusing on both ends of the system -- beginning at the headwaters (pre-school) and exiting into postsecondary education, training, and employment. Unfortunately, they are neglecting the river itself -- the elementary and middle years.

This analysis and its eight recommendations are concerned with the capacity and reliability of the main system to support at-risk youngsters as they navigate the currents within the elementary and middle grades, when at-risk children and youth are between ages nine and fifteen. They must be guided safely past the treacherous shoals and rapids that disadvantaged youngsters encounter within and outside of school. If these years are neglected, the efforts and expenditures devoted to the youngest and oldest children and youth at risk will be dissipated.

One System of Waterways for All Boats

This report argues for a long-term, public-private strategy to mobilize and coordinate knowledge, information, and resources in the public and private sectors on behalf of youngsters at risk between nine and fifteen years of age. The premise follows the comparison of education and training to a complex system of waterways. A person attempting to negotiate rapids in one branch may not be conscious of the total system, yet all the parts are interrelated and affect one another.

One of the vehicles most commonly recommended by the business community is based on the idea of linking societal resources, including financial and political leadership, through "partnership" between public and private sector groups. School-business partnerships of many kinds have spread nationwide in recent years. Considering the magnitude of the challenge presented by at-risk young people, however, there is relatively little solid information about effective cross-sector partnership development, especially for long-term, systemic aims. Furthermore, the few analyses of documented experience confirm that partnerships are complex undertakings indeed. As Marsha Levine (1983) puts it so well, "Partnerships occur in the realm of practice, and for the practitioner, conceptualizations may be 'too thick to navigate and too thin to plow'" (p. 26).

This analysis rests on the premise that it will be essential for greater numbers of youngsters to successfully navigate the distance from pre-school through entrance to high school with skill and confidence. The attention of decisionmakers throughout the public and private sectors concerned with long-range human resource development must focus on increasing the number, quality, awareness and accessibility of options for that age group -- namely, nine to fifteen -- who are at risk. In other words, public education, training and supportive services aimed at educationally and economically disadvantaged children and youth must -- absolutely must -- provide adequate support for the seven-year haul of schooling that provides the foundation for successful adolescence and adulthood.

The resources for this support are not and will not be available solely in the education system. Essential resources throughout the community must be mobilized, coordinated, and focused on the needs of at-risk youngsters. This is a challenge that requires strong, flexible management through long-term collaboration among the major leaders. Fortunately, there are signs of increasing awareness of the need to increase investments of public and private resources on behalf of children at risk. Unfortunately, there is too little understanding of the complexities of managing such investments effectively through public-private collaboration.

The first step in understanding the issue is to accept the premise that education in this country has become "all one system" (Hodgkinson, 1985). Just as no man is an island, no part of the education system, from kindergarten through postsecondary schooling or training, is independent of any other part. The disadvantaged child who cannot read in fourth grade may be pregnant by eighth grade and a mother on AFDC whose child attends that very school, when her former classmates are college juniors, in the workforce or armed services -- or in prison at an annual cost of $25,000.

Building the Headwaters: Investments in Earliest Prevention

In September 1987, The Committee for Economic Development (CED) released its second report of public policy recommendations: Children in Need: Investment Strategies for the Educationally Disadvantaged. The Research and Policy Committee of CED, which prepared the study, declared a consensus among the coalition of leaders from business and education that the nation must increase, focus and sustain investments in health and education for disadvantaged children at the earliest ages.

Soon after the CED report was issued, David Rockefeller, Jr., said that the Rockefeller Brothers Fund would probably expand and sponsor projects to improve public education, possibly directing special attention to the very young because "age six is just too late" (Teltsch, 1987).

The CED report focused on the need for investments in fresh designs for preschool and early elementary level public schooling and in community health, especially prenatal and postnatal care for pregnant teenagers, parenting education and child-care programs of high quality. CED therefore advocated policies that would focus upon youngsters who are at risk even before they are born.

The recommendations in Children in Need extended and refined CED's two previous policy statements -- one in 1982, Public-Private Partnership: An Opportunity for Urban Communities, and one in 1985, Investing in Our Children: Business and the Public Schools. The 1982 statement recommended public-private partnership to generate consensus on community goals, institutional roles, and sustained support for action:

> Public-private partnership means cooperation among individuals and organizations in the public and private sectors for mutual benefit. Such cooperation has two dimensions: the policy dimension, in which the goals of the community are articulated, and the operational dimension, in which those goals are pursued. The purpose of public-private partnership is to link these dimensions in such a way that the participants contribute to the benefit of the broader community while promoting their own individual or organizational needs (p. 2).

The 1985 statement emphasized long-term employability of the potential labor force of the 1990s and beyond. Basing its recommendations on a two-year survey of employment needs as perceived by personnel officers of both large and small firms, the earlier CED report stated that "specific occupational skills are less crucial for entry-level employment than a generally high level of literacy, responsible attitudes toward work, the ability to communicate well, and the ability to continue to learn (emphasis added)." The first report also concluded that "employers do not think that the schools are doing a good job of developing . . . much-needed abilities (p. 17)."

CED's Research and Policy Committee made a fundamental distinction in *Investing in Our Children* when it insisted that efforts to improve prospects for the disadvantaged represent an investment rather than an expense to the American public. The report expanded the theme of inter-sector collaboration to benefit the larger community while meeting mutual interests. In the 1987 report, *Children In Need*, CED again stressed the theme of investment to address a compelling need for a qualified work force to compete in the changing world economy. The Committee cited research from the House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families concluding that $1.00 of public funds invested in preschool education of high quality would be repaid nearly five times in the form of reduced costs of special education, public assistance and crime. Owen B. Butler, retired chairman of Procter & Gamble, stated, "If we spend this money now, in the long run we will reduce our tax burden." (Fiske, 1987).

The recommendations in *Children in Need* spell out strategies for investing public and private resources in children by targeting "the 30 percent of children facing major risk of educational failure and lifelong dependency" (p. ix). These strategies call upon the business community to take the lead in forming diverse coalitions to address issues at the federal, state and local levels.

CED's chain of recommendations over a five-year period link public-private partnerships in general to a rationale for business involvement in public schooling, and to business leadership of coalitions to redeploy public and private resources to the youngest children at risk.

The fundamental link in this chain of recommendations is the argument for public-private partnerships -- a combination of public and private sector institutions and organizations and individuals capable of defining and carrying out community goals that also meet their special needs. Logically these collaborations should consist of more than businesses and schools; they should embrace the full range of community priorities. Indeed, Children In Need was the first among dozens of major reports on American education published over a four and one-half year period whose recommendations emphasized the connections between schooling, health, and general developmental needs of young children (Fiske, 1987).

In an immediate response to the CED recommendations, Secretary of Education William J. Bennett stated on the NBC News program "Meet the Press" that the Reagan Administration will consider shifting Federal aid toward education of younger children (New York Times 1987, September). "We're happy to take a look at this and think about redeploying some of our funds at that early level," he said, adding that although the $308 billion to be spent on education "ought to be enough," priorities might be shifted.

In an August 27 letter to the New York Times, published after his statement on "Meet the Press," Mr. Bennett offered an optimistic view of the capacity of elementary and public schools to provide basic education (Bennett 1987). What prompted his letter was a front-page article on a Congressional Budget Office report on the nation's schools. Mr. Bennett stated that it is a mistake to conclude, as the Times had implied, that attempts to improve schools will fail in the face of broad demographic and cultural changes. "To the contrary, the research shows that good schools do make a difference, and that good schools make a big difference for disadvantaged children. I have seen many schools that succeed under what would be considered adverse circumstances (several are described in our "Schools That Work" handbook). And we know a great deal about what makes for schools that work." His letter goes on to cite such factors as high standards for academic performance, high expectations for students, and a rich and challenging curriculum.

The logic of investing in preventive strategies at the very earliest opportunities balanced the emphasis on promoting academic excellence. National and state policy making are as concerned with dropout prevention programs as they are with higher academic standards for high schools. The negative consequences for disadvantaged youngsters of increasing standards of performance in grade promotion, graduation, and courses became a predictable consequence by mid-decade. The introduction to a March, 1987 article by two senior Chicago Public Schools officials, which appeared in a national educational journal, captures the reaction of many educators to the trend toward stiff academic standards:

> The recent effort at education reform has placed additional burdens on young people, and all we have accomplished is to increase the dropout rate. That statement, from the president of the

> National Association of Elementary School Principals, is supported only too well by statistics. Nationally, the dropout rate has peaked at approximately 25 percent. However, when one looks at schools in large urban centers, oftentimes the dropout rate is significantly higher. Studies of individual schools show a dropout rate as high as 75 percent. The largest number of dropouts come from poor, immigrant, and minority communities (Azcoitia and Viso, 1987, p. 33).

At the same time there has been a growing recognition that while "enough is known to take action" in preventing and reclaiming school dropouts (Hahn, Danzberger and Lefkowitz, 1987), coherent policies and programs for preventive action are essential and scarce.

TARGETING AND COORDINATING RESOURCES

Targeting and coordinating resources at the local, state and federal levels toward at-risk children and youth aged nine to fifteen require collective leadership representing and involving institutions, agencies and organizations with differing priorities and agendas. The two priorities, targeting and coordinating, should be treated separately.

Recommendations for reform offer cogent arguments for educational reform on several fronts, but two on either end of the school-age span are obvious -- namely, pre-school/primary school and secondary school. Recommendations to reform high schools (Boyer, 1983; Education Commission of the States, 1983; Goodlad, 1984) pose policy dilemmas because they present a sharp choice to be made in deploying limited resources. Decision makers are required to weigh the imperatives of secondary school reform against the urgency of preventive investments aimed at the youngest children (Committee for Economic Development, 1987; National Coalition of Advocates for Children, 1983).

How can these competing urgent priorities be sorted out? H. Dean Evans, of the Lilly Endowment, captured the dilemma in a recommendation to the Indiana Congress on Education, that "we must begin every place at once" (Evans, 1983).

Of course, given limited resources and the urgency of the demands, this is not possible. A compromise is possible through separating the need to target material resources on children at risk, consistent with the CED 1987 report, from the equally important need for coordination of services toward at-risk youngsters aged nine to fifteen.

The two priorities are different and require different types of collective leadership. If the educative agencies serving these age groups are interdependent, then the strength of one part of the system inevitably affects the vitality of each other part of the system, from kindergarten through training or graduate school. The experiences of a girl at risk in pre-school will ultimately affect the experiences of students in a high school mathematics class. That girl may be pregnant at fifteen and a dropout a year later, facing a life of failure and economic dependency as the mother of yet another child at risk. Or she may be a whiz at math and tutor younger children or classmates. She may pursue a career in science, business, education or public service. Whatever happens to her will affect everyone.

CED urges that community resources, including but not restricted to the schools, be targeted toward the youngest children at risk to assure that they can enter elementary school with a sound foundation of health, academic skills and social confidence. Complementing this recommendation, however, should be a strategy for coordinating as many resources and educative agencies as possible to provide adequate ongoing support for disadvantaged children and young adolescents during the subsequent years of schooling.

In practice, public-private partnerships involving the communities of educational and business leaders would pursue separate but related priorities. One priority would be political -- presenting a unified and cogent case for increasing public and private resources for education, and deploying them strategically toward young children in need. The other priority would be to foster collaborative planning and development of policies and programs that would guarantee ongoing support during the elementary and middle grade period of schooling for young people at risk between the ages nine to fifteen. This approach to allocation of resources, policy making, planning and program development would acknowledge the overriding importance of the early years for disadvantaged children, while recognizing that failure to address the needs of at-risk elementary and middle grade youngsters would undermine those early investments.

Age Nine: The Fourth Grade Watershed

The priority of age nine is that most children move from primary to elementary school in fourth grade, specifically from the academic stage when they are learning to read to the stage when they are reading to learn. It is in fourth grade that basic skills are put to the test of mastering content. A child who has not mastered basic skills for elementary academic tasks has no access to content. Remedial or compensatory educational interventions at that point delay that progression of the child into mainstream schooling. The longer that entry is delayed, the greater the risks of chronic incapacity become.

Robert Slavin of Johns Hopkins University insists that "Any child who is two years behind in reading by third grade is in serious trouble." Slavin cited evidence that predicts long-term trends for educability and employability based on a child's achievement, behavior and attitudes by third grade. He claims that if a student has repeated a grade by the age of 9, the chances of long-term chronic failure or marginal achievement are extremely high.

A principal of one New York City intermediate school serving mostly disadvantaged children said that in the absence of sufficient and coordinated support services for youngsters at risk, educators "practice triage." In Baltimore, whose schools serve consistently high percentages of children from low-income families, 25 percent of the students fail the first grade. In some urban schools around the country up to 75 percent of the students fail first grade twice (Slavin, interview). These data predict those who will almost surely become permanent members the underclass.

In pressing for the earliest identification and interventions possible, Slavin and others claim that there is no shortage of exemplary programs -- approaches that practically guarantee success if applied consistently enough and early enough over time. If the aim is to prevent the need for expensive stop-gap pre-adolescent and teenage dropout prevention programs, then policies, knowledge about effective approaches, and resources themselves must be coordinated.

A great deal of legislation and other activity, is directed at the younger age levels, but at present, Chapter 1 serves less than 40 percent of at-risk youngsters. No matter how substantial the investments at earlier levels may be, if children are not amply and continually supported in their efforts to succeed in school during the transition into adolescence, the gains of such programs as Head Start will steadily dissipate. Negative factors in the lives of these children at risk, exerted over a period of seven years will surely erode the gains made in primary years. Finally, unless resources are deployed for this age group of children and youth at risk, the costs of special dropout prevention and rehabilitation programs will be required to meet ongoing crises that develop during the elementary and middle school years, and indefinitely beyond.

APPROACHING THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY AT RISK

The changing images of American adolescence and the transition from school to work during the past quarter century, reflect major social, economic and technological changes in our society. The purposes of schooling and the prospects for employment have changed drastically in the past quarter century. The high school dropout of the 1950s had many more prospects for employment than today's dropout. In fact, until the 1950s the national school dropout rate was about 50 percent. At the turn of the century, barely 10 percent of males graduated from high school. In past generations, school dropouts encountered no extraordinary disadvantages because the lack of a diploma carried no stigma. A dropout was not considered unemployable because he or she was automatically deemed incompetent merely by lacking a diploma.

Anyone could lead a productive life without a diploma -- not only as a member of the labor force, but as a parent and respectable citizen. The workplace, the family, the immediate community, and the society as a whole were much less demanding and complex than they are today. There was no sense that workplace, family, community and society were intricately related into "one system" (Hodgkinson, 1985).

The situation facing today's dropout is vastly different. As Workforce 2000 and other reports repeatedly emphasize, the youth of today and the the future cannot hope to compete in the service and knowledge industries without solid skills in problem-solving. Policy makers today are claiming that public schools must undergo major changes in curriculum, organization and staffing before they can assure that all children and youth possess these skills.

About the middle and late 1950s, one of the more popular novels about adolescence was Booth Tarkington's Seventeen, a light story of how a typical adolescent boy comes of age in America. The television show Our Miss Brooks captured one popular image of adolescents in school, though the movies showed an ominous side of adolescence and urban high schools (a vocational school) in Blackboard Jungle.

The publication of J.D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye altered the face of wide-eyed innocence that characterized images of post-World War II adolescence. Holden Caulfield, escaping to New York City (and Central Park) from the "phony" world of adults, wanted to save innocent children from corrupt values. Holden Caulfield's adolescent viewpoints seem prophetic. His negative attitudes are similar to those of today's disadvantaged youth at risk and lead to similar consequences. In both cases, the youth escapes to the streets. Holden eventually lands in a psychiatric hospital; today's youth at risk end up in the underclass, often in the criminal justice and welfare system.

Rebel Without A Cause, a landmark film that transformed James Dean into a cult figure, captured a sense of profound alienation. Accurate, recognizable depictions of diverse typical occupations were hardly ever featured on television or film. Almost all references to the world of work were nebulous.

The theme of alienation from the inauthentic world of adult American society, reflecting profound distrust of the political establishment, reached its apex in the 1960s with the warning that no one over thirty could be trusted. Rebels of the 1960s were never without a cause. The civil rights movement had propelled black concerns to a priority in the mass media. The civil rights movement, the Great Society and the Vietnam War dominated the American consciousness. In the 1960s, a teacher seeking acceptable literature that spoke to contemporary concerns of young people remarked, "If Tarkington had written Seventeen today he'd have called it Eleven."

As Richard Wright's Native Son and Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man began to attract readers, they paved the way for Claude Brown's Manchild in the Promised Land -- a bleak, despairing and forbidding portrait of black urban youth. The landmark publication, however, which gave impetus to Great Society programs, was Michael Harrington's The Other America -- the first major delineation of the underclass. At the time it was published, Harrington was an obscure, socialist writer for the Catholic Worker, and hardly anyone expected the book to attract much of a readership. The publication of that book coincided, however, with the precise moment when the American impetus toward massive social reform sought a catalyst.

As the image of poverty amidst plenty in America distressed the public conscience, a major segment of American society abruptly emerged from the background. Policy makers responded to a political mandate -- the War on Poverty. By the early 1970s, there was public awareness, heightened by an economic recession, that the alienation of minority youth was not a temporary phenomenon. Soon the terms "structural unemployment" and "underclass" gained currency among policy makers attempting to describe the causes and consequences of a growing problem that appeared to resist conventional explanations or solutions. The disproportionate and growing statistics on black youth unemployment were particularly noticeable. Furthermore, many young black males appeared to be so profoundly alienated from mainstream institutions that initiatives by the public school system, the employment and training community, or community based organizations seemed equally ineffective.

By the late 1970s, minority youth unemployment had grown to crisis proportions. The Youth Employment Demonstration Projects Act (YEDPA) of 1977 was a multi-billion-dollar investment in the search for a coherent national delivery system of services to enable disadvantaged youth to become employable. (Butler and Darr, 1980). At the same time, academic circles became alarmed about declining test scores (College Entrance Examination Board, 1977). Immediately after those projects were finally completed in 1982, the major education reform of the 1980s began in earnest with the publication of A Nation At Risk.

In the past thirty years, the conceptions of adolescence have drastically changed, in large part because of public awareness of minority and disadvantaged youth. Many of these images are positive, representing major strides toward equity in American society. At the same time, however, many of today's disadvantaged youth suffer a pervasive lack of positive male role models; a deep distrust of practically all adults; few if any positive personal relationships; a predisposition to judge others and themselves negatively; and an inability or refusal to identify and explore alternative courses of action. The difference between today's imperatives and the the 1950s is that dropping out is no longer a valid alternative for today's youth. A child who fails school today at any level is at risk of being doomed to a life of unemployment unless special, concentrated and sustained initiatives are taken to reverse the situation.

When Is a Youngster At Risk?

In Children In Need, CED offers this definition of children at risk:

> Children are educationally disadvantaged if they cannot take advantage of available educational opportunities or if the educational resources available to them are inherently unequal (p. 5).

In Barriers to Excellence: Our Children at Risk, Harold Howe II and Marian Wright Edelman, co-chairs of the National Coalition of Advocates for Students, characterized "children at risk" in the following way:

> Who are "children at risk?" They include a large proportion of young people from poor families of all races. They include minority and immigrant children who face discriminatory policies and practices, large numbers of girls and young women who miss out on education opportunities routinely afforded males, and children with special needs who are unserved, underserved, or improperly categorized because of handicap or learning difficulties. Children at risk are capable of success in school and work. However, many miss out on those opportunities to their own and the nation's detriment (p. v).

Several factors combine to undermine the potential success of children and youth at risk during the period between ages nine and fifteen. These factors must be addressed through a variety of means over time (Hahn, Danzberger and Lefkowitz, 1987; National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1985).

Psychological factors are overwhelmingly negative: youngsters feel rejected by school and in turn reject most aspects of school life. They are unmotivated to achieve in any aspect of school and feel that their courses do not address their individual needs. They are not only unable to relate to authority figures; many are socially isolated from their peers as well.

Although the world of jobs, experiences in adult workplaces, and income are attractive to them as they approach adolescence, their perception of the requirements of that world and access to primary labor market employment is unrealistic. They lack clear goals, have low aspirations, lack basic skills in reading and computation, and resist structured tasks. Their behavior also undermines their chances in entry level jobs: absenteeism, truancy, discipline problems, poor hygiene, impulsiveness, and self-destructive patterns such as drug or alcohol abuse (Lankard, 1987).

The research cited in Hahn, Danzberger and Lefkowitz (1987), Wehlage and Rutter (1987) and others (e.g., Rumberger, 1983; Peng, 1984) shows that most dropouts come from distinct groups, mostly with low socioeconomic status -- that is, the poor, immigrants, people whose English is limited, and people who have difficulty learning.

But the data do not analyze precisely what qualities in this background produce poor risks. Not surprisingly, poor school performance, low grades, and failure of courses are the most significant factors leading to dropout. Accordingly, analysts such as Professor Henry Levin of Stanford University are focusing attention upon redesigning early education to eliminate those school-related factors (Levin, 1987).

While most young people who fail or drop out of school see little or no connection between school and the so-called real world, it is also true that most school dropouts are not leaving to pursue any clear alternative. They have only a vague notion of the consequences of their actions.

> Bethlehem, PA school officials screen all middle school students for indications that they may be at risk. Characteristics include:
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> - more than 20 days absent in the preceding year
> - functioning more than two grades below expected level
> - participation in an existing intervention program
> - has been retained at least one grade
> - has frequent disciplinary referrals
> - has a demonstrably unstable family environment
>
> The interdisciplinary team in each school selects a target group of 25 students at risk and focus on changing negative behavior and attitudes toward school, and on improving academic achievement.

WHY LEADERS ARE SO ANXIOUS

The political task of mobilizing public support for school improvement has changed since Sputnik startled the nation thirty years ago. Declining middle-class enrollment has left the schools without a substantial, vocal -- and voting -- constituency. Political influence on behalf of public schooling must therefore emanate from another power base.

The school reform movement reveals steady pressure on the part of leadership groups to increase public awareness of the need for improved schools -- public institutions capable of assuring excellent education for all students, including those at risk. This campaign reflects anxiety among organizations across all sectors concerned about the nation's future economic capacity. The rhetoric in some of the reports has been so strong that the nation is practically compared to the Titanic.

In his analysis of the demographics of education, All One System, Harold L. Hodgkinson explains that the total U.S. population in 2020 will be about 265 million people, a very small increase from the current figure of 238 million. He summarizes:

> Today, we are a nation of 14.6 Hispanic and 26.5 million Blacks. But by 2020 we will be a nation of 44 million Blacks and 47 million Hispanics -- even more if Hispanic immigration rates increase...Most important, by around the year 2000, America will be a nation in which one of every three of us will be non-white. And minorities will cover a broader socioeconomic range than ever before, making simplistic treatment of their needs even less useful.

Hodgkinson and others stress that most of the poor consist of children -- 40 percent among ethnic minorities in 1983. Half of the children in female-headed households live in poverty. Consequently:

1. More children entering school from poverty households.
2. More children entering school from single-parent households.
3. A larger number of children who were premature babies and who will have learning difficulties.
4. More "latch-key" children and children from "blended" families resulting from remarriage.
5. More children from teenage mothers.

6. A continuing decline in the level of retention to high school graduation in virtually all states, except for minorities.

7. A continued drop in the number of high school graduates, concentrated most heavily in the Northeast.

8. A continuing increase in the number of Black middle class students in the entire system.

9. Continuing high dropouts among Hispanics, currently about 40% of whom complete high school.

10. Fewer white, middle class, suburban children, with day care (once the province of the poor) becoming a middle class norm as well, as more women enter the work force.

11. Increased numbers of Asian-American students, but with more from Indonesia, and with increasing language difficulties.

12. A continuing increase in the number of college graduates who will get a job which requires no college degree -- currently 20% overall.

In September, 1987 the U. S. Census Bureau reported that the nation's Hispanic population had increased 30 percent since 1980 -- five times as fast as the rest of the population -- and totalled 18.8 million. Earning rates of Hispanic men lagged behind inflation.

For Employers, the Future Is Not What It Used To Be

A need for workers in entry-level jobs, no matter how pronounced, does not currently force employers to hire youth who lack skills and reliable work habits. Employers are already hiring retirees part time, arranging job-sharing, automating, and subcontracting such functions as data entry overseas.

> We are just entering an era in which youth will be in short supply in America. Fast food restaurants are one indicator of the future -- virtually every one has a "now hiring" sign in front (Hodgkinson, 1985, p. 18).

Hardly any of our institutions have adjusted to a new reality that is still newly in evidence, for example in the fast-food television ads featuring elderly workers. A cavalier attitude toward the shortcomings of youthful workers still characterizes the entire society:

> If a new 19 year-old employee doesn't work out, fire him/her and get another, if a freshman doesn't work out, replace him/her with another, if the army recruit doesn't adapt, replace him/her, etc. (p. 18).

The nation cannot afford to maintain this trend indefinitely -- or indeed, for more than a few years longer. The major reports published throughout the eighties, most of them purporting to be about educational reform, offer overwhelming evidence that leaders in the business and policy community realize that leaders in communities nationwide must join their talents to nourish long-term human resource development.

Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the Twenty-first Century, the report issued by the Hudson Institute in June, 1987, identifies several policy issues affecting disadvantaged minorities and women, and by extension, their children. The increased skills required by the emerging work force require efforts to hasten the integration of minority workers and creation of authentic equal employment opportunity. Furthermore, the demands on human capital require improved educational preparation of everyone entering the work force. Black men and Hispanics face the greatest difficulties in the emerging job market, and one major obstacle is educational attainment:

> Between now and the year 2000, for the first time in history, a majority of all new jobs will require postsecondary education. . .
>
> Put simply, students must go to school longer, study more, and pass more difficult tests covering more advanced subject matter. There is no excuse for vocational programs that "warehouse" students who perform poorly in academic subjects or for diplomas that register nothing more than years of school attendance. From an economic standpoint, higher standards in the schools are the equivalent of competitiveness internationally (Johnston, et. al., 1987, p. 117).

Schools Are Part (But Not All) of the Problem

Wehlage and Rutter (1984) point out that we do not know the extent to which low educational, social or occupational aspirations, negative attitudes toward school, low self-esteem, etc. are brought to the school or are produced by school experiences. Studies of student views clearly show that "they leave because they do not have much success in school and they do not like it." Instead they seek entry-level menial work or care for their children, etc. About half of all female dropouts leave for marriage and/or pregnancy.

Wehlage and Rutter therefore recommend that "since traditional research has tended to identify characteristics least amenable to change, the focus of new research should be directed toward understanding the institutional character of schools and how this character affects the potential dropout."

Their research focused on marginal students' views of school focused on three factors: (1) teachers' interest in students, (2) effectiveness of school discipline, and (3) fairness of school discipline. The picture of high school as viewed by these students was "a place where teachers are not particularly interested in students; the discipline system is perceived as neither effective nor fair . . . For the dropout, school is a place where one gets into trouble; suspension, probation, and cutting classes are . . . frequent (pp. 21-22).

The process of dropping out is gradual and cumulative. The decision involves rejecting an institution that is fundamental to society and "must also be accompanied by the belief that the institution has rejected the person" (p. 21). A surprising result is that students gain self-esteem when they drop out. In fact, the overall gain is the same as for the college-bound students -- those with the highest self-esteem.

Wehlage and Rutter depart from other researchers because "we see the school as having an opportunity for initiative and responsibility to respond constructively to those students whose continued education is at risk." They strongly dispute the claim of other researchers (e.g., Bachman) who question the campaign against dropping out because some adults "can manage reasonably well on the basis of ten or eleven years of education. Perhaps others would so so if they were not branded as 'dropouts.'" Wehlage and Rutter argue that this conclusion is irresponsible because it excuses schools from providing effective education for all students. By legitimizing a "push-out" approach for the least academically able students, this position suggests that public education is for some -- not all -- youngsters (pp. 29-33).

They recommend three directions for school reform:

1. An enhanced sense of professional accountability among educators toward all students;

2. A renewed effort to establish legitimate authority within the institution;

3. A redefinition of school work for students and teachers that will allow a greater number of students to achieve success, satisfaction and continue with additional schooling (pp. 29-33).

Preliminary Results of State Education Reform Initiatives

Have infusions of funding for school improvement improved the chances for students at risk? Responses to school reform mandates indicate mixed results from the billions of dollars that have been flowing into the schools.

The total increase in revenues allocated per pupil in American public schools was 17.21 percent between 1983-1986.

The top ten states were:

Wyoming:	38.01%
Connecticut:	34.12
Indiana	28.95
Virginia	28.72
New Jersey	28.34
Massachusetts	28.11
Pennsylvania	26.31
North Carolina	26.30
New York	24.71
Arkansas	23.76

Balancing these impressive figures, the nine lowest states were all under 4 percent, ranging from Alabama (3.82%) to Oklahoma (minus 23.72%). In addition, the Federal role in education has shifted toward the states. Several prominent governors advocating educational reform in the states have left office: Governors Mark White (Texas), Lamar Alexander (Tennessee), and Richard Riley (South Carolina).

Many initiatives conceived in the rush of political enthusiasm have borne the stamp of the business community. The prevailing rationale for school reform nationwide, after all, rested primarily on the connection between better schools and economic prosperity.

Driving the arguments for improving the quality of schools has been a need for well-trained and well-motivated labor force. The theme has been that America will be able to compete successfully in international markets only if the workers of tomorrow's highly technological society -- children and youth who are in school today -- possess advanced skills and knowledge. Even entry-level workers will have to be more skilled than large numbers of young people who are now graduating from our public schools.

On the much more immediate front of strained labor markets, individual states are trying to attract businesses and industries, especially in technological fields, by funneling money into school improvement.

State funds pumped into the schools have been buying computers in the classrooms, paying for higher salaries for teachers, and promoting curriculum development and teacher training in new priorities such as "critical thinking." Furthermore, practically every state in the nation has tightened the screws in the classroom, requiring schoolchildren at every level to meet tougher academic standards. Some states are testing teachers to weed out incompetents. Florida lengthened the high school day and now requires a minimum grade-point average for graduation and eligibility for sports.

Some preliminary results have been startling. South Carolina (13.87% increase in funding) schools have boosted standardized test scores at all levels; average S.A.T. scores have jumped more than in any other state -- 36 points since 1982.

Former Secretary Terrel H. Bell estimates that the school reform movement has benefited about 70 percent of the nation's students. Since 1983 the number of California students taking three or more years of mathematics has increased by 15 percent; the number taking science is 20 percent higher. "We are stimulating our better students," he said.

But are students at risk learning better? Despite evidence of general progress, students at risk appear to be casualities of the school reform movement.

Dr. Bell tempered his praise by warning that reforms have not touched the other 30 percent of youngsters, who are mainly low-income minority students. "We are still not effectively educating them."

Fostering Effective Social Skills

Middle schools and junior high schools are often difficult environments for teaching and learning because they do not successfully address the central motivations affecting youngsters entering early adolescence. These children are struggling with uncertainties over sexual adequacy, interpersonal power, autonomy of behavior and beliefs, and social acceptance among peers. Without sensitive, strong support, they often remain preoccupied with these concerns for years, especially when other disadvantages compound their problems. The apathy and hostility toward the demands of mathematics, history, or English composition often become institutionalized, part of the school culture. Howe and Edelman (1985) underscore this point:

> The school, in all of its human complexity is, after all, an enormously important institution in a young person's life. It is, in many ways, another home. If school is an unfriendly place that provides the protection of anonymity, but offers little personal attention, support or recognition, no amount of emphasis on new curriculum will succeed (p. 56).

Efforts to change a negative pattern of group and individual behavior requires sustained and intensive intervention to alter the at-risk youth and institutional culture itself. The school must become a supportive home for youngsters at risk, whose normal home environment is strained by economic and social distress. Successful interventions can be conducted in the school environment through enlistment, counseling, training and ongoing support of young adolescent leaders to change the prevailing cultural norms. School interventions in Chattanooga, TN, for instance, showed that at least as early as age 11, the leaders among these groups of young adolescents can be identified and trained to influence the entire peer group to create a pleasant, constructive school environment. (Butterfield, interview 1987).

This strategy extends beyond traditional concepts of counseling; it involves a combination of teaching and delinquency prevention training. Early adolescents at risk must be taught positive social skills to relate to their peers as well as adults in diverse relationships. They must be supported as they practice new skills, and they must be systematically rewarded as they learn. Delinquency prevention strategies developed on the Social Development Model of Hawkins and Weis (1980) promote attachment to parents and school, together with commitment to conventions of social order and the law. The model has been extensively tested in field research through the National Center for the Assessment of Delinquent Behavior and its Prevention.

> The Social Development Model proposes that if the primary units of socialization (families, schools, peers, and community) are to influence youth away from delinquent activity, youth must have the opportunity to be involved in conventional activities, have the skills necessary to be involved successfully, and those with whom the youth interact must consistently reward desired behaviors.
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> The cumulative effects of experiences at school, with families and peers, and in the community determine whether a young person will develop the necessary bond to society. When their experiences lead to the development of a social bond of attachment, commitment and belief, young people are more likely to become positive, contributing members of their schools, families, and communities (Cuervo, Lees and Lacey, 1984, p. 29).

The middle years of schooling from elementary through junior high school are the critical period for developing durable, positive social skills. Instead of the exclusive emphasis on academic competence, the priority must be social development in a supportive environment.

A serious decision about social and educational priorities must be made at the level of schools and organizations that cooperate with schools to support youngsters at risk. For example, throughout the "effective schooling" movement, it is widely accepted that a linchpin of effective schooling is teachers' communication of high expectations for students' academic achievement. Valid as this finding may be in studies of schools that are already instructionally effective, it is nevertheless clear that youngsters must be adequately supported in their basic needs for security. The school community must communicate a sense of caring and belonging before students can realistically be expected to pursue academic competence.

The research literature on effective policies and practices for young adolescents at risk has converged to urge that special attention and resources be devoted to the developmental needs of young people at risk in the middle school/junior high years. The work that has emerged from the Center for Early Adolescence, by Gayle Dorman and Joan Lipsitz; research at Johns Hopkins University; the College Board's Commission on Precollege Guidance and Counseling (1986); the delinquency prevention research (Hawkins and Weis, 1980); and the conclusions of Dropouts In America are persuasive. Unfortunately, the teaching and social practices in a great many middle schools, intermediate schools, and junior high schools that educate at-risk youngsters contradict most of these principles. Far too many schools emphasize punitive regimentation; antiquated teaching methods; watered-down, dull textbooks; excessive testing of narrow skills, and negative messages to individual children who are most anxious about how others perceive their worth.

As a result, as disadvantaged youngsters begin to form group and individual patterns of attitude and behavior, they increasingly rely upon their peers for information, role models, and guidance.

Dorman (1987) emphasizes that the peer group need not be a negative influence, nor is it necessary for adolescents to become alienated from adults and traditional social institutions in favor of the counter-culture of their peers. Dorman writes:

> ...The peer group...provides a testing ground for new identities, deeper friendships, and experimental behavior. Young adolescents' intense need for peer acceptance, which sometimes seems indiscriminate and obsessive, makes them especially vulnerable to both negative and positive peer influence. Frequently, parents and teachers are rightfully concerned about young people's

> choices of friends and about social pressures during this age period. These concerns should not be dismissed, but should be tempered by an appreciation for the power of positive peer pressure.
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> Contrary to popular myth, young adolescents do not reject out of hand their attachments to adults as they form deeper peer relationships....For many young adolescents, parents' influence remains greater than peers' influence throughout these years (Benson 1984). Likewise, teachers and other adults are important as role models and sources of encouragement and support. Not yet ready for total independence, young adolescent students need adult-imposed structure in their lives, along with opportunities to make choices within reasonable boundaries (p. 3).

Rochester, NY: A Developmental Approach to Middle Schooling

The Rochester school system has approved a plan to break up the city's high schools, which have traditionally combined seventh through twelfth grade, into middle schools and high schools. Middle schools are being designed around a developmental approach to the education of adolescence, with special attention to positive disciplinary strategies. The plan is expected to address the needs of all students, especially the large number who are at risk and who have in the past experienced disproportionately high rates of suspension and expulsion.

The spirit of the Rochester plan is evident in proposed discipline guidelines produced by the social/emotional task force. Sample "major premises" include the following statements:

1. Students have a right to pursue their education in a school environment free of unnecessary conflict and disruption.

2. The teaching and modeling of acceptable behavioral standards should be an integral part of the school's program.
3. Every effort should be made to minimize classroom conflict (both teacher and student initiated) through a staff and student program for enhancing interpersonal skills.

4. Suspension jeopardizes a students' education and should only be used when the school's behavioral modification strategies and resources have been exhausted.
   There is an understanding that immediate suspension may be recommended for students whose actions constitute a documented case of: (a) extreme defiance and/or

disruption; or (b) jeopardy to the health, safety, welfare, and/or morals of him/herself or others.

5. The primary responsibility for classroom discipline rests solely within the teacher's domain. When the classroom teacher assumes full responsibility for a positive, orderly environment, fewer problems arise that require disciplinary actions.

6. Discipline standards and consequences must be clear, equitable, and age-appropriate.

7. Parents must be notified when a student begins to exhibit inappropriate or disruptive behavior.

8. The school must apprise students and parents of students' right to due process.

School official should therefore adhere to the following principles of effective discipline:

- Focus not on discipline-as-rules or discipline-as-punishment, but on discipline as a means toward creating an orderly environment for effective learning.

- Have clear policies that reflect, insofar as is reasonable, the way parents want their children treated in school.

- Make sure teachers and administrators know that they are expected to enforce the spirit as well as the letter of policies and regulations consistently and fairly.

Schools that have no discipline problems feature high expectations for students, focus on causes rather than symptoms of discipline problems, emphasize positive behavior, and use preventive rather than punitive actions to improve behavior.

The principal plays a key role in the school, but teachers handle all or most routine discipline problems.

The schools have stronger-than-usual ties with parents and community, and are open to critical review and evaluation.

The Rochester school district is instituting a number of changes in administration of rules, regulations and general disciplinary practices. While these changes are intended to improve the quality of school experience for all students, they are especially significant for students at risk -- those who have been most frequently subjected to disciplinary measures. Previously the schools applied virtually the same standards, punishments and expectations to all students enrolled in the high schools -- whether young seventh graders (12-year-olds) or seniors -- young adults. It is no wonder that the rate of suspension and expulsion, not to mention the alienation felt among youth at risk, was excessively high.

The approach being developed by the Rochester schools is consistent with the research on prevention conducted by G. D. Gottfredson and his colleagues (1983 and 1984), which concluded that organizational rather than programmatic elements are most influential in affecting behavior. New policies stress preventive behavioral strategies and maintain a supportive environment. School officials attempt to respond appropriately to different types of behavior, guided by the principle that "all educators should coordinate their efforts toward helping youngsters develop a sense of self-worth and self-control throughout the year."

COORDINATING RESOURCES FOR DROPOUT PREVENTION IN THE MIDDLE YEARS

The prediction that stiffer standards would increase the dropout rate has come true. For example the dark side of Florida's rising S.A.T. scores is a 40 percent dropout rate. Additionally, higher academic requirements for graduation have forced reductions in vocational programs.

Statistics on dropouts are genuinely alarming: the central city high schools are reporting rates approaching 50 percent, depending on who is counting (Ford Foundation Letter, 1984). Louisiana's statewide dropout rate is about 50 percent, and the rate among Hispanic students often hovers around 75-80 percent.

California aptly illustrates the recent trend in dropouts because demographics indicate that it will be the first "majority minority" state, one where over 50 percent of the population will be members of minority groups. A high percentage of the minorities will be young; the average age of Hispanics in the United States is 22 (Hodgkinson, 1985). In 1967, the dropout rate in California schools was barely 12 percent. Three years later the rate had jumped to 17 percent, and it climbed to 20 percent by 1972. The 1976 figure was 22 percent.

All analyses of the dropout problem confirm that its causes are complex, not entirely school-related, and can be ameliorated (Hahn, Danzberger, and Lefkowitz, 1987; Orr, 1987). Coordination of these resources must provide enough support for at-risk youth in the middle grades to build their capacity to function effectively in a variety of settings -- not only the relatively controlled environment of the classroom. Building social competencies of at-risk youth in middle grades must be a priority. Those skills must become habits -- a foundation for employability skills refined in high school and beyond.

These skills are essential for access to the primary labor market. In contrast with the secondary labor market of low-pay, low-skill industries, the primary market consists of jobs that are "multi-dimensional, with stability and productive futures" (Lacey, Hahn and Kingsley, 1987).

The literature on dropouts converges around three key ideas. First, there are many different reasons for dropping out of school, and some have nothing to do with the school itself; they are beyond the control of schools. Second, solutions to the dropout problem exist throughout our communities. They require collaboration among public and private institutions. Third, youngsters who are at risk require greater and more sustained attention both within and outside of the school setting, than other students.

Typically the ninth grade is the critical year, and innovations are especially needed to improve the quality of the ninth grade experience for at-risk youngsters. For instance:

> One of the most promising programs using JTPA funds to address needs of at-risk ninth graders in urban high schools is Boston's Compact Ventures. Begun in 1985 in two high schools, supported by JTPA 8 percent funds, the program combines remediation, case management services and counseling outreach for at-risk youth. Its success in retaining students and improving academic achievement has justified program expansion in 1987 to 10 high schools and will serve 1,000 students. It has also expanded within schools: three schools will offer these services for all four grades (Lacey, 1984).

Several publications offer fresh information about problems and solutions to dropping out. Dropouts In America: Enough Is Known For Action takes the optimistic view that the resources and knowledge currently exist to address the problem effectively without delay. The National Committee for Citizens in Education has compiled an excellent book of sources in the field (1987). That publication was originally prepared for 21 urban school districts whose planning of dropout prevention programs received support from the Ford Foundation.

Recent federal legislation is also addressing the issue. In April, 1987 the Appalachian Regional Commission granted $719,762 to support dropout reduction programs in 37 Appalachian communities, bringing to 85 the number of dropout projects receiving a total of more than $2 million since 1985. Foundations are also providing support for exemplary programs. The Annie Casey Foundation has allocated $50 million to support model approaches to dropout prevention in five urban school districts. Funds will support special technical assistance as well as the programs themselves, and will total about $2 million annually for each school district over a five-year period.

Several state and school district initiatives in dropout prevention have concentrated on collaborative planning and the coordination of programs involving schools, community and governmental agencies, and other organizations such as businesses. These efforts target at-risk students under the age of 16, including elementary level youngsters. Efforts underway in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, and Wisconsin are noteworthy:

> California: SB 65, a five-year legislative program, directs funds in two stages to 200 school districts whose dropout rates are 38% or more. In the first stage, high schools and junior high schools can receive up to $6000 (elementary schools up to $4000) to plan programs and services for students at risk. In the second stage, the state awards school districts $40,000 to support an Outreach Consultant to coordinate program implementation among school staff, community agencies and businesses.
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> The California High Risk Youth Liaison and Field Services Unit has published an inventory of 41 model dropout prevention and recovery programs.
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> Colorado: To assist schools in meeting a district-wide requirement to create programs focusing on at-risk students, Denver school officials have enlisted broadly representative community groups, ranging from social service agencies and business groups to parents and religious organizations, to improve teachers' understanding of diverse cultural and socio-economic factors affecting students throughout the school district.
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> Connecticut: The State Department of Education is coordinating state agencies in dropout prevention activities, assisted by a clearinghouse of federal, state, local and foundation-funded resources. The state office of research and evaluation follows trends in monitoring and programming in selected school districts, and the Priority School District Program provides funds and technical assistance

to assist programs for at-risk students.

Massachusetts: Students at risk beginning in the seventh grade benefit from discretionary funds for dropout prevention. Individual school districts with high percentages of low-income students and high dropout rates compete for funds to develop supplementary programs. Each district school committee applying for funds must appoint a broadly representative community-based advisory committee.

New York City: $28 million of state funds approved in 1984 support the Attendance Improvement and Dropout Prevention program, or AIDP. The legislature permitted flexibility in the design and services of AIDP efforts, and encouraged collaboration between schools and community-based organizations.

In addition to creating AIDP programs, the New York City public school system allocated about $12 for dropout prevention programs in the 1985-86 school year. In three junior high schools a school-based case manager refers individual at-risk students to appropriate community services or to services within the school and monitors progress.

Wisconsin: Legislation passed in 1985 requires all school districts to engage in collaborative planning to combine resources of schools, businesses, and community-based organizations in specific plans for students at risk. School districts with high dropout rates can apply for funding to support planning based on a guide for planning services.

The Urgency of Preparing At-Risk Youth for the Primary Labor Market

A report by the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), entitled Declining Earnings of Young Men: Their Relation to Poverty, Teen Pregnancy, and Family Formation (1987), underscores the need to prepare at-risk youth for the primary labor market -- that is, productive jobs with opportunities for advancement. CDF's report warns that the economic impacts of sharp declines in earnings among young men during the past decade has severe social consequences. CDF contends that a 30 percent decline of earnings among all groups of young men has jeopardized their ability to support a family above the poverty level. The most severe losses (nearly 50 percent) occurred among young black men.

According to CDF, profound economic shifts have made it difficult, often impossible, for young workers to support families. More specifically, the large decline in real earnings among young men lies in the continuing shift of jobs from production of goods (manufacturing) to the service sector, together with reductions in full-time, year-round jobs available to young men.

Marian Wright Edelman, President of CDF, attributes increases in teen pregnancy and declining marriage rates among minorities in part of this decline in earnings. Her judgment echoes the warnings of the Hudson Institute:

> The failure of our nation to ensure that all youths can meet changing labor market demands or that unskilled workers can obtain jobs and wages at adequate levels has been a disaster for those left behind because they lack basic academic skills or credentials.
>
> But disaster is also pending for the country as a whole. If these trends continue, their related effects will include a workforce inadequately trained for today's and tomorrow's jobs, rising poverty rates among children and young families, lower marriage rates, greater rates of out-of-wedlock births, and single-parent families and increasing demands on public systems of all sorts (The Advocate, 11-15).

The report states that:

- In 1973, about 60 percent of males 2024 could support a family of three beyond poverty level. In the 1980s, only 42 percent could support three people above poverty by 1984.
- Regardless of race or educational level, young men aged 20-24 whose earnings exceeded the poverty threshold were three times more likely to marry than those with earnings below poverty. In 1974, two in five men 20-24 were married. Over the next decade, the marriage rate dropped 50 percent.
- College education pays enormous dividends -- especially among black males. Young black college graduates increased their earnings, but annual real earnings of young black male dropouts dropped 61 percent between 1973 and 1984.

- A high school education may not pay a sufficient dividend. Young black high school graduates suffered a stunning 52 percent loss in real earnings.

- Loss of earnings were most severe among young adult males with the least education; those who suffered most were high school dropouts. The percentage of all male dropouts 20-24 with earnings above the three-person poverty line dropped by nearly half -- from 59 percent in 1973 to 32 percent in 1984.

  In 1984 only four in ten white male dropouts, and only one in nine black dropouts could support a family of three.

CDF report data were derived from data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Young Americans, conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor and the Current Population Survey, conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Special analyses for the Fund were prepared by Dr. Andrew Sum, Center of Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University.

The report also says that the decline in earnings reflects major reductions in hours of work and higher unemployment among young adult workers. The percentage of young adult workers employed full time dropped from 82 to 76 percent in 1985, and the proportion of unemployed male dropouts 20-24 (unable to find any job) increased more than 25 percent.

Edelman claims that these trends threaten to undermine the work ethic and the traditional progression into adulthood:

> Today, many young adults are finding it far more difficult to obtain adequate earnings, and adolescent parenthood poses a major barrier to future self-sufficiency. Young people, including many teen parents, continue to leave school in search of the jobs that will make the transition to adulthood complete. But they find a world radically different from the one their parents and grandparents found when they did the same thing. The Advocate, 11-15).

"Average" Disadvantaged Youth Are At Risk in the Marketplace

Although average, marginally achieving, socially conforming high school students are generally not considered to be at risk by conventional definitions, their chances of long-term employability in primary labor sector jobs are nevertheless limited. Large numbers of high school graduates are discovering that they lack essential skills for entry level jobs with chances for advancement. Analysis of achievement scores of students in the Clark Foundation-funded projects revealed that most of the students had average or above average grades in their junior or senior year, yet scored only about the sixth or seventh grade level on standardized tests of reading and mathematics.

The finding supports charges about the decline of academic standards, but most importantly, it demonstrates that large numbers of disadvantaged high school graduates have been and are currently at risk in the primary labor market. Buffalo Partnership officials, for example, mentioned that in an area of high unemployment, many high school graduates are no better off economically than high school dropouts because they lack marketable skills.

In other words, young adults at risk in the marketplace include many disadvantaged youngsters who meet basic school and classroom requirements, who perform at an average or below average level in school, and who are clearly not in danger of failing or dropping out. Their employability in primary labor market jobs is minimal.

This fact was dramatically underscored in the New York City during the summer of 1987, when four major New York City banks were able to fill only 100 out of 250 jobs that had been promised to selected high school graduates because they could not pass an eighth grade arithmetic test. Like students in the Clark-funded Partnership efforts, these high school graduates were conforming, average students who performed satisfactorily during interviews.

For students who perform marginally well, the correspondence between the demands of the classroom and the requirements of the workplace is weak. Merely escalating academic demands will not improve that connection.

LESSONS ABOUT PARTNERSHIPS

Unlike previous school reform movements, the trends of the 1980s spawned numerous swift counter-responses in policies and programs. The 1987 CED report and Secretary Bennett's prompt response to its main recommendation exemplify how dialogue in the community of education policy makers has become extraordinarily well-informed about the urgency of translating broad themes into effective policies and programs.

There has been a noticeably steady improvement in the quality of public discourse about public policy reform, evident in the depth of analysis in the many reports on educational reform and social priorities for economic development. Excessive criticism of opposing viewpoints has diminished in the national debate about educational reform. The strident charge by critics of the "excellence movement" has been that it is extremist, neglecting or even abandoning the unfinished equity agenda. The equally easy rejoinder has been that an uncritical agenda to achieve social equity at any price inevitably sacrificed standards and fundamental principles of sound education. By 1987, the emphasis in analyses and policy debates shifted from placing blame to sharing responsibility -- that is, toward the theme of partnership.

Insights from Studies of Collaboration

Heated controversies over priorities for allocating limited public and private resources, however, demonstrate the challenges involved in creating and managing public-private partnerships. The 1982 CED policy statement was grounded on a series of case studies examining the changing institutional relationships in seven cities -- Baltimore; Pittsburgh; Chicago; Minneapolis-St. Paul; Portland, OR; Dallas, and Atlanta (Fosler and Berger, 1982).

MetroLink, a project run by the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL)documented public-private collaboration in eight metropolitan areas. Metrolink focused on long-term human resource development, tracking partnership development in Atlanta; Portland, OR; Boston; Louisville; St. Louis; Minneapolis; Indianapolis; and Hartford (IEL, 1986).

From different perspectives and with different methods and tools, these two major analyses have yielded considerable insight into a total of twelve metropolitan areas, and corresponding analyses of three -- Atlanta, Portland, OR, and Minneapolis-St. Paul. In addition, Brandeis University and Public/Private Ventures have separately analyzed the results of public-private collaboration around 21 Work-Education Partnerships sponsored by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation beginning in 1979. (Lacey, Hahn, and Kingsley, 1987; Snyder, 1987). These partnerships, which focused upon disadvantaged in-school youth, combined funding from JTPA, foundations, and private corporations as well as tax levy funds. Since three of the Clark Foundation partnerships were attempted in Portland, OR, St. Louis, and Pittsburgh, the fund of information about inter-sector collaboration is growing steadily, particularly about Portland, OR.

The Brandeis University analysis of the Clark Foundation Work-Education Partnerships in sites around the country concentrates upon lessons learned from experience. As analyses of other ambitious partnerships revealed, many of the projects failed outright; most of them yielded mixed results; only a handful demonstrated unequivocal success in achieving their stated goals and objectives. It is extremely important that institutional decision-makers avoid making the simplistic judgment that the projects largely failed; instead, close attention must be paid to the insights from those experiences.

Similar lessons were learned from the Ford Foundation's investments totalling some $30 million in the 1960s, called the Comprehensive School Improvement Project (CSIP). These substantial investments of private funds supported partnerships between public elementary and secondary schools and institutions of higher education. About 25 projects were carried out in a variety of school systems and focused on various levels from early childhood through high school, and each project was linked with one or more colleges or universities. These partnerships were designed around linkages for technical assistance, research and training.

The vision behind these partnerships was that individual innovations held limited potential for general school improvement; more comprehensive approaches to school change would stand better chances to create institutional change. Clarence Faust, the president of the Fund for Advancement of Education and later a vice president of the Foundation, expressed the vision this way: "The effect of each of these innovations is like pulling a single strand of a spider's web; You pull one and you shake the whole web. Let's deal with the web" (Meade, 1979, p. 3).

In 1972, a team of Foundation consultants completed a lengthy study of CSIP, whose insights stimulated the Foundation's thinking about issues of quality and equality in public education. The Foundation published it in a report entitled A Foundation Goes To School, which focused on the Foundation's role, its assumptions, perspectives, strategies, tactics and decisions. In explaining how the report was perceived and why its insights were so significant, Meade (1979) provided an overview that planners of public-private partnerships should heed:

> Since the assessment explicitly found the CSIP strategy wanting in a number of aspects, some observers ignored the insights and lessons of the report and pointed only to a picture of failure. Others, including some well-known news analysts and commentators, were

> astonished that a major foundation would concede to any shortcomings whatsoever, much less make such concessions in print. A then prevailing public attitude seemed to be that one could not or did not learn from institutional failures but only from institutional successes.
>
> In fact, A Foundation Goes To School did not frame its analysis in terms of success or failure. Rather, the study considered lessons that could be learned from a sustained, well-funded, and thoughtful effort to improve schooling by means of a coherent set of innovative strategies. The study found that despite remarkable individual efforts, generally the projects did not firmly establish innovations in practice or produce widespread improvement in the quality of educational programs. Moreover, it concluded that even if the programs had adopted an even more "comprehensive" and coherent approach, they would have been unlikely to achieve more than they did.
>
> But more important, the report challenged some cherished beliefs and assumptions about education and institutional change. For one thing, the study found that it was much more difficult to put the products of educational research and development into practice in schools than had been thought -- especially in urban settings. Applying university-based academic expertise to the very different world of public schools and their teachers rarely led to lasting or significant improvements -- or even changes. Also, the team discovered that more money per se does not necessarily guarantee better results (p. 5).

CED planned its research in 1978, well before "partnership" became a buzzword. The point of the CED studies was "to establish a historical base for understanding the growing interdependence of public and private sectors in urban areas." The purpose of publishing the case studies was to "provide perspectives on the more recent developments as well as insights into the process by which more productive relationships can be forged among government and nongovernment institutions" (Fosler and Berger, 1982, p. vii). By the time the MetroLink Project was completed, school-business partnerships had proliferated around the country, but qualitative understanding of partnerships had not noticeably improved. As MetroLink report put it:

> There is little solid analysis -- that is, based on concrete information in specific settings and gathered by informed participants -- about how effective collaboration takes place. . . . There is little acknowledgement of the complexity and difficulty of leadership in collaborative activities (p. i).

These analyses of partnerships have confirmed a central distinction in the 1987 CED report, Children In Need. CED stresses that while national anxiety has been directed toward the need to improve the quality of public schooling, educators alone cannot accomplish the task, particularly in urban areas. The responsibilities of public institutions and agencies for addressing the many needs of children at risk cannot be confined primarily to the public school system. A range of public and private organizations must collaborate around multiple needs long-range human resource development. Furthermore, this collaboration must not be concerned primarily with the mainstream children and youth, nor can it be content with providing equal opportunity. Instead, the priority must be to assure the success of those whose prospects of success have long been the least promising.

Interdependence and Coordination of Cross-Sector Institutions

The interdependence of institutions concerned with human resource development must therefore become a fundamental theme of goal-setting and operations to address the needs of at-risk children and youth. Coordination of resources must be the theme of strategies to serve the age group of nine to fifteen -- the children in the middle years, upon whose success all else -- pre-school, primary school, high school, postsecondary education, employment and training -- will depend.

The author's investigations nationwide reinforce the general stand of CED's Research and Policy Committee, but with two significant differences -- a focus on a specific age group (nine to fifteen), and an emphasis upon coordination of services. The first point is that the age group nine to fifteen covers that span of years which begins after most children are supposed to have become socially conditioned to school, and which ends when young people are supposed to begin assuming adult roles and responsibilities. The second point is that during this seven-year period, conventionally from about fourth grade through the freshman year in high school, major public institutions share formal responsibility with the family for raising children.

These two time-honored notions are rooted in longstanding assumptions about the function and capacity of our social institutions to prepare young people for effective participation in the American society. Those children and youth who are "at risk," however, have minimal chances of effectively participating in the economic mainstream.

Many Agencies Educate Children and Youth at Risk

During this turbulent period of reappraisal of national and educational priorities it is useful to draw upon a historian's perspective. Lawrence Cremin (1976) offers the following interpretation of "educative agencies" that operate throughout American society. His viewpoint illuminates the reasoning behind our emphasis upon coordination of services for children and youth at risk, who are between the ages of nine and fifteen .

> The important fact is that family life does educate, religious life does educate, and organized work does educate; and, what is more, the education of all three realms is as intentional as the education of the school, however different in kind and quality.
>
> Every family has a curriculum, which it teaches quite deliberately and systematically over time. Every church and synagogue has a curriculum, which it teaches deliberately and systematically over time -- the Old and New Testaments, after all, are among our oldest curricula, and so are the Missal and the Mass, and so is the Book of Common Prayer. And every employer has a curriculum, which he teaches deliberately and systematically over time; the curriculum includes not only the technical skills of typing or welding or reaping or teaching but also the social skills of carrying out those activities in concert with others on given time schedules and according to established expectations and routines. One can go on to point out that libraries have curricula, museums have curricula, Boy Scout troops have curricula, and day-care centers have curricula, and most important, perhaps, radio and television stations have curricula -- and by these curricula I refer not only to programs labeled educational but also to news broadcasts and documentaries (which presumably inform), to commercials (which teach people to want), and to soap operas (which reinforce common myths and values) (pp. 21-22).

Cremin's discussion can be extended to include policies and practices under such widespread and intense scrutiny throughout the 1980s in a nationwide attempt to redesign and to re-focus the major educative agencies of the American society in preparation for the year 2000 and beyond.

Cremin's theory of education provides a strategy for analyzing and formulating recommendations to address this priority for children and youth at risk between the ages of nine to fifteen. Cremin explains how such diverse "educative agencies" as family, television, religious institutions, and employers "mediate" one another. The term mediate refers to "a variety of functions, including screening, interpreting, criticizing, reinforcing, complementing, counteracting, and transforming" (p. 23):

> . . . Each of the major educative agencies performs a mediative role with respect to the others and with respect to society at large. The family mediates the culture, and it also mediates the ways in which religious organizations, television broadcasters, schools, and employers mediate the culture. Families not only teach in their own right, they also screen and interpret the teaching of churches, synagogues, television broadcasters, schools, and employers. One could go on and work out all the permutations and combinations. What is more, these various institutions mediate the culture in a variety of pedagogical modes and through a range of technologies for the recording, sharing, and distributing of symbols. In effect, they define the terms of effective participation and growth in the society (p. 23).

The public school is one of many educative agencies. Some agencies assist the schools in achieving their mission, while others act as a counter-force to formal education. Generally speaking, the pedagogical modes and range of technologies used in schools are hard-pressed in their competition with television and radio (U.S. Public Health Service, 1971; Liebert, Neale, and Davidson, 1973). Some educative agencies, notably television, compete aggressively against the school curriculum -- not only the content of the academic agenda, but its linear, hierarchical and value-laden structure as well.

Cremin's theory about the effects of the complex relationships among educative agencies in our society sheds considerable light on the crisis that faces young people who are at risk between the ages of nine and fifteen . The span of years in which these dominant social institutions largely shape the terms of effective participation in our society is brief -- only seven years. If a diverse array of institutions in the society define the terms of effective participation, and if the public schools are only one among these agencies, then the challenge of building the capacity of the enormous system of interrelated parts is to deal with the interrelationships themselves.

The challenge is to mobilize, focus and coordinate the educative agencies that collectively can assure optimal chances for at-risk young people to participate effectively in the American society. In attempting those tasks, such tools as major reports help define a consensus around some collective vision of social priorities. Returning to Cremin's idea, we are attempting to re-build an effective system of "educative agencies" in the coming decade. Finally, the effectiveness of the system will be judged in large part according to how well it addresses the needs of young people at risk.

Our concern about the age group between nine and fifteen respects the critical importance of the youngest age groups as explored in Children In Need, but shifts attention toward those years that the major public institutions and policies converge upon a specific location -- "a place called school" (Goodlad, 1984) -- as the principal agency held responsible for preparing young people to enter postsecondary education or the labor force.

Leaders' Consensus About Need for Inter-Sector Partnerships

The theme of collaboration involving several sectors -- public, private, and non-profit, or independent -- has characterized most of the recommendations for revitalizing the nation's system of education. Many of these recommendations have come from business leaders such as those on the Committee for Economic Development (CED), who have proposed to take major initiatives on behalf of public education in the arena of public policy making.

National attention and resources directed toward educational reform began in 1983 with the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform and the report of the Education Commission of the States' Task Force on Economic Growth, Action for Excellence (1983). Four years later, the stream of reports had not abated: At least three significant reports were published within weeks of one another, vying for attention of policy makers: The Institute for Educational Leadership's Dropouts In America: Enough Is Known For Action, The Hudson Institute's Work Force 2000, and the CED report Children in Need.

The earliest reports on educational reform reflected a familiar economic argument and concentrated national concern and attention upon standards and curricula, particularly in the American high school. A national dialogue developed around the reports, amplified by news and professional journal articles, monographs, conferences, seminars, legislative debates, and state and local policy initiatives for school reform. Issues in public education consistently reflected a need to realign national priorities in the light of future demographic, economic, technological, and international marketplace realities. Over time and through many media, the complex concepts were translated into terms that the general public could comprehend, and communicated in such a variety of ways that certain themes underlying the message became clear.

Today we are seeing a transition within a single decade toward a growing consensus among leaders in the private as well as public sectors. As Children in Need stated the case for targeting the disadvantaged, "Programs and policies...must be tailored to meet the needs of the whole child within the context of school, family, and community." Furthermore, ..."the three most important investment strategies ...(are): prevention through early intervention, restructuring the foundations of education, and retention and reentry" (p. 11).

Voices in the business community, naturally, have been among the most noticeable in expressions of concern and willingness to take leadership. Although the initial voices harmonized around the refrain of excellence, the chorus later gathered strength around the theme of children at risk as well.

By 1987, with the publication of Children in Need and the endorsement in principle of its theme by Secretary Bennett, the tone of discussion had shifted. Secretary Bennett expressed optimism about strategies for improving public schooling, even during an era of fierce competition for limited resources. Secretary Bennett's willingness to consider redeploying funds was consistent with the trend of the economic reform movement throughout the decade. Essentially he expressed the importance of continuing to explore priorities in view of new information from the never-ending flow of analyses from highly respectable sources. CED, which enlisted advisors such as Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, and others in developing its statement on behalf of national business leadership, serves as one among many influential sources that have been attempting repeatedly over many years to enrich a growing national consensus about extremely complex societal issues.

After the first few dozen education reform studies appeared, each new analysis could be assessed as a fresh variation on the theme announced in A Nation At Risk. Early on, it was clear that one priority would be to create strategies for coordinating efforts to improve the education system. The following statement from the executive summary of Action for Excellence (Education Commission of the States, 1983) restated the vision of partnerships as a strategy for improving the system:

> Mobilizing the education system to teach new skills, so that new generations reach the high general level of education on which sustained economic growth depends, will require new partnerships among all those who have a stake in education and economic growth. The challenge is not simply to better educate our elite, but to raise both the floor and ceiling of achievement in America (p. 9).

More than four years later, Work Force 2000 underscored the combination of economic and social forces that would affect the quality of the American labor force in the coming century; Dropouts in America: Enough Is Known For Action emphasized that specific steps could be taken immediately to recoup severe losses and prevent further erosion of the future labor force. Both of the CED reports, Investing In Our Children and Children In Need, emphasized that the commitment of the business community to exerting sustained leadership toward realizing the priorities in those reports "is not merely a matter of philanthropy; it is enlightened self-interest" (CED, 1985).

Collaboration Around Mutual Interests and Needs

Inter-sector collaboration is difficult to manage for several reasons. Turf issues, mutually negative perceptions of capabilities and motives, lack of long-term committed leadership, and competition over resources are only a few of the more common obstacles to collaboration. Other barriers, especially for private sector-public school collaboration, can be interpreted from three perspectives: inter-institutional relationships, partnerships between public and private sector organizations, and a systems perspective of the interaction of schools, workplaces, and community (Levine, 1983). An organization's decisionmaking process, structure, its processes of communication, negotiation, compromise, and initiation all are part of the complexities of partnerships.

Strategies that fall generally under the popular term "partnership" between business/industry and public schools take many forms, including direct corporate contributions, lobbying and other forms of political support, and encouragement of employee and other volunteer activities. Examples of each of these are widely visible: Corporate donations frequently pay for equipment, materials, trips, and special fundraising; the CED recommendations for business to take the lead in forming partnerships with educators on behalf of young children at risk cluster around lobbying and political support for state legislation; Adopt-a-School programs -- in Memphis, TN, for example, where all schools have been "adopted" by companies whose employees have become integral to the school community.

Levine (1983) defines "collaboration" more narrowly, as "relationships between organizations, involving sustained interaction between members of each organization and including the identification of shared and agreed upon goals" (p. 4). She adds that "partnerships or collaboratives are different from other strategies for private sector involvement in their requirement for direct interaction between the corporation or business and the schools. Herein, perhaps, lie their greatest strength and also the source of their greatest problems" (p.5).

In order to mobilize community resources in a systemic effort to address the multiple problems of at-risk youngsters between nine and fifteen years of age, the self-interests of all collaborating agencies must be addressed as well (Schilit and Lacey, 1982; Lacey, 1983; Timpane, 1982, Levine, 1983; Institute for Educational Leadership, 1986).

The vision guiding the enlightened self-interest has become increasingly pronounced among advocates of public-private collaboration, such as the Houston CIS program. The priority is to revitalize and coordinate community resources to address the needs of educationally disadvantaged children.

The Communities in Schools (CIS) program, which grew out of the national Cities in Schools program, is a vehicle for marshalling and coordinating multiple services targeted to at-risk youngsters. These services include social welfare, recreational, health, juvenile justice and other areas that affect the capacity of the at-risk youngster to function.

CIS is successfully addressing needs of at-risk youngsters in Houston public schools. Although the statewide school dropout rate is 37 percent (50 percent and more in some Hispanic neighborhoods), CIS has helped reduce the dropout rate to 3 percent in some of the toughest schools in Houston.

CIS addresses the combined mutual self-interests of the Texas Employment Commission, the Texas education agency, and private corporations such as Southwestern Bell and IBM.

Charlene Jackson, a Texas Employment Commission deputy administrator and member of the CIS state advisory council, explains the stake of the Commission in the effort: "We feel that the Employment Service needs to be an activist agency. We need to enhance young people's ability to enter the workforce -- that helps employers, who pay our bills. That's why we're willing to lend staff and put so much of our Wagner-Peyser money into this program. It gets results."

James R. Adams, president of the Texas division of Southwestern Bell, who chairs the CIS state advisory council, added, "Southwestern Bell's involvement is not altruistic. Our company is the second largest private employer in the state. We're tied to the state economy, and we're concerned about the state as a marketplace. We need a qualified workforce in Texas to expand our economic base and to supply educated people to run the equipment that's a part of our business.

"Companies are aware that CIS offers them an opportunity to refocus existing resources, resulting in less duplicative effort. . . The key to this program is its track record: we're redirecting resources and measuring results."

Tom Viola of IBM, who used to chair the PIC in Austin, devotes 25 to 30 percent of his time to CIS because "the

> scope of the dropout problem is so large that any management with vision would be supportive" (NAB, 1987).

Can partnerships achieve both excellence and equality in education? In 1959, at the peak of a prior movement for excellence in education, James Bryant Conant stated his vision of excellence and equity in the close to his book The Child, the Parent, and the State:

> I believe historians in the year 2059 will regard the American experience in democracy as a great and successful adventure of the human race. Furthermore, as an essential part of this adventure -- indeed, as the basic element in the twentieth century -- they will praise the revolutionary transformation of America's treatment of its children and its youth. They will regard the American public school, as it was perfected by the end of the twentieth century, not only as one of the finest products of democracy, but as a continuing insurance for the preservation of the vitality of a society of free men.

Those words, written nearly thirty years ago, combine with Lawrence Cremin's theory to supply the premise of this report. Practically speaking, the broad challenge that has been repeatedly announced by the business community and by policy analysts at every level is how to manage the "revolutionary transformation of America's treatment of its children and its youth."

Clearly the job cannot be confined to school reform, for it requires sustained, collective attention from public and private sector leaders at every level. Albert Shanker (1987) argued as recently as October, 1987 that "there's been very little real reform" (Shanker, 1987).

Mr. Shanker suggested that voter support for educational reform may have peaked. The 19th annual Gallup Poll of public attitudes toward the public schools indicated that barely 25 percent of the American public thought that public schooling has improved since 1983. A third of parents with children in public schools thought that schools were better, but most of the remainder thought that the schools and student achievement had not improved.

Perhaps most importantly, those who graded the schools lowest were predominantly less affluent, nonwhites, and residents of central cities -- not only the fastest-growing part of the school population, but the segment that comprises the majority of at-risk students.

Mr. Shanker wrote:

> The biggest danger that I see in the Gallup study is the tendency to talk about "reform" as though it has really happened. For the most part, it hasn't. Sure, standards have been raised, and it's important to test teachers to see if they know their subject. But little has been done to figure out how to get students who weren't making it under the soft standards to meet the new and tougher requirements. . .
>
> . . . It would be a disaster if the public judged the whole of the reform movement on the basis of attempts to push our classrooms back into the supposed good old days. The public wanted standards and it wanted schools to do things differently. Instead, the public is often getting standardization and a spiffed-up version of the same old thing -- mandated texts and lock-step curriculum, heavy emphasis on uniform and narrow tests, bogus accountability schemes and more power to school bureaucracy and to the traditional top-down, factory style of schooling. . .
>
> Farsighted visions like those outlined by the Carnegie report are still on the drawing board. The work of Ted Sizer, John Goodlad, Seymour Sarason and the dedicated teachers in the networks of innovative schools they are building is still new and does not get the support and attention conventional "reform" does. . . Real reform has just begun (Shanker, 1987).

It is now clear that the priorities of leadership must concentrate on disadvantaged children from the earliest moment that they are at risk -- specifically, in pre-natal care -- and continuing until they are safe and sound, productive American citizens. Yet while deploying sufficient public (and private) resources toward pre-school education may be necessary, as CED contends, that policy decision would not suffice to assure decent chances for their continued educational survival, much less success. Children who are constantly exposed to economic, social and educational disadvantages, both inside and outside of school, over a seven-year period cannot be expected to maintain the strengths gained in primary school.

Sustained attention must be paid to those crucial years between nine and fifteen, when youngsters who are at risk undergo the most significant development during elementary school and middle grades. Leaders of many educative agencies affecting these children must collaboratively conceive and implement systemic, policy-based as well as programmatic approaches to long-range human resource development, and the priority must be to assure the success of these disadvantaged young people.

This agenda is neither a simple and straightforward nor an inexpensive way to proceed. It is definitely not business as usual, for this country has little experience and no tradition in cross-sector collaboration. Several metropolitan areas have been clarifying the critical elements of successful collaboration. In addition, a number of efforts around the country are demonstrating that with top-level commitment and the right mix of circumstances and resources, including luck, the job can probably be accomplished.

Understanding the Challenges and Risks of Partnerships

The dilemma posed by competing priorities for resources and action is apparent in the efforts of business leaders to clarify how best to form coalitions to improve the quality of education and the resources available for educating and training the future workforce. The type of leadership for developing long-term coalitions and partnerships must be collaborative. Unfortunately, successful experience in public-private collaboration for human resource development in this country is thin. In addition, efforts to link public schools and businesses have generally yielded mediocre results because key elements of genuine public-private collaboration have been absent. There are very few examples of successful public-private collaboration that address systemic issues involving at-risk youngsters.

Donald Clark, president of the National Association for Industry-Education Cooperation, minces no words in the following criticism:

> Although there has been a proliferation of articles, forums, studies and task force/commission reports on partnerships over the past five years, the real reason for industry-education cooperation, school improvement, has been overlooked for the most part (Clark, 1987, p. 24).

He adds that most partnership activities are brief and episodic, uncoordinated, fragmented, unstructured, ad hoc, and involve "low levels of investment and limited objectives."

The checkered history of school-business partnerships developed around the country during the past decade tends to reinforce Dr. Clark's charge that there is entirely too much cavalier rhetoric about the potential contributions that business can make to improve the quality of education, especially for disadvantaged children and youth:

> There is the reality that the entire system needs help, and yet, many industry representatives and educators do not fully understand the scope and immensity of what must be done in establishing a partnership for furthering school improvement (p. 25).

Judging from the studies of school-business partnerships, successful and otherwise, purporting to help disadvantaged young people become employable, Dr. Clark's observation is practically an understatement.

On the positive side, some school-business partnerships have succeeded beyond high expectations, and several of them not only offer inspiration but substantial insight into partnerships development.

Cautions about Promising Partnership Models

The hopeful rhetoric of press releases notwithstanding, genuine public-private collaboration is still a novelty in most metropolitan areas. Rarely do projects even attempt to address systemic problems of long-term human resource development (Institute for Educational Leadership, 1986). A compendium of exemplary "partnerships in education," available from the U.S. Department of Education, is as large as a metropolitan phone book (U.S. Office of Education, 1987).

Programs whose quality can fairly be called exemplary and which also serve youngsters at risk between age nine and fifteen are scarce. Certain examples are fast becoming inspirational classics -- Eugene Lang's "I Have a Dream" program, the Boston Compact, Ogilvy and Mather's Graphic Arts program at Roberto Clemente High School in Chicago. Other various programs described in this report are examples of promising approaches, some of whose roots are not yet securely fastened, that indicate directions to be explored rather than models to be emulated.

The Bridge program in Hartford, CT, for example, appears to have extraordinary promise, judging from preliminary evidence being gathered by Public/Private Ventures, Inc. Bridge pairs a middle school with a high school and attempts to improve the transition from one environment to the other -- a transition which disadvantaged youth at risk frequently fail to make. All the preliminary results of Bridge are encouraging. Students have been attending school, remaining in the program, and are benefiting from jobs that apparently enhance their employability.

It would be a mistake, however, to jump to conclusions about institutionalizing Bridge as a model. Public/Private Ventures staff urge caution in making judgments about demonstration projects designed for at-risk youngsters, especially when their strong reputations are grounded mainly on anecdotal evidence (Interview with Thomas J. Smith, 1987).

Programs that offer far less of a basis for emulation are being called models. Many so-called exemplary partnerships involving schools, business, and government agencies are not yet reliable, however, because the processes involved in creating and maintaining them are treated simplistically. It is unrealistic to attempt replicating them. More often than not, the critical elements of success reinforce Clark's admonition about "the scope and immensity of what must be done in establishing a partnership. . ."

FOUR PROMINENT EXAMPLES: A CLOSER LOOK

An analytic view of four examples of noteworthy programs noted in several reports reveals common features that underscore the complexity of managing institutional change to improve the prospects of youngsters at risk. The examples and variations are the "I Have A Dream" program, the Boston Compact, the Buffalo Work-Education Partnership in Buffalo, NY, and the Ogilvy and Mather Graphic Arts program (Committee for Economic Development, 1987).

I Have A Dream

> The "I Have A Dream" program, which started as one New York City businessman's philanthropic experiment in a New York City school, has gathered considerable attention since it was covered on the "60 Minutes" news program. "Lang's gang," an entire class of sixth graders in a Harlem elementary school, were each promised $2,000 if they graduated from high school. Forty-eight of the original 61 expect to graduate, and 25 have been accepted at colleges. The program is one of the most prominent examples of tangible incentives for students to stay in school (Hahn, Danzberger and Lefkowitz, 1987).
>
> The direct approach of this "civic entrepreneur" appeals mightily to those who feel frustrated with efforts to change the schools through public policies, investments and reform movements. The "I Have A Dream" incentive seems to bypass the school system entirely, cutting through the Gordian knot of school improvement. It avoids the problems of reforming teaching, curricula, administration, and school structure.
>
> A closer look at I Have A Dream reveals that there is more to the approach than the simple promise -- a material incentive to stay in school. The program has succeeded in large because Mr. Lang personally devoted enormous personal

commitment to its success -- a resource whose value should not be understated. The program also features intensive support services, follow-up, and mentoring from the Harlem Youth Action Corps. "I Have A Dream" is therefore much more than a straightforward financial incentive. Rather, it is a program of coordinated supportive services anchored by a guarantee of continuing support after high school graduation.

Philanthropists in fifteen other cities are supporting similar programs: A Cleveland businessman places funds at the end of each grading period into trust accounts in the name of each student, to be paid when the student has been accepted at an accredited college (New York Times, Oct.11, 1987).

Corporations have practiced this idea for years. Local companies in Racine, WI, provide college grants and summer jobs through the Racine Environment Committee, Inc., a private nonprofit education fund supported through corporate contributions since the 1960s. That fund provides higher education grants to minority or low-income youth aged 17 to 21. The model is easily adaptable to younger students, but the specific incentive in Racine was aimed at older youth. The Committee operates a Summer Job Placement Service for more than half of its grantees to supplement tuition. A specialist helps an employment coordinator run the summer jobs program and provides counseling services to the youth. Many youth return to the same job for several summers and build credentials toward a permanent job after graduation (Schilit and Lacey, 1982).

Young Scholars Program at Ohio State University

Ohio State University is institutionalizing Lang's concept to encourage black sixth-graders to finish high school and attend college. Its Young Scholars Program seeks to reverse the decline of black enrollment at four-year colleges throughout Ohio by providing incentives to students who would usually have little chance of attending college (New York Times, Oct. 11, 1987).

Starting in the spring of 1988 with 200 students from five cities, the program will provide tutoring and two-week summer workshops as well as financial incentives. The summer session includes academic and recreational activities and exposure to career opportunities that demonstrate the benefits of a college degree. Each student is also assigned a mentor from the community to help with high school education and college planning. Those admitted to Ohio State University will be given financial aid. The University is expanding the program each year until 1,400 students are enrolled.

The Boston Compact

The Boston Compact is a model for urban communities seeking collaboration among leaders in public education, universities, business, and city government. Its founders worked through existing networks, notably the PIC and Tri-Lateral Council. It developed from a number of complex circumstances combining significant historical, economic, cultural, political, legal and even personal factors.

All of these factors combined in an unprecedented set of relationships among varied communities of Boston leaders. Changes in Boston public education are intended to be systemic, not merely programmatic. Visible commitment from business leaders can be documented in numbers of jobs. In return, a commitment from educators can be calibrated in improved test scores and other measures. In particular, a job is a guaranteed, materially valuable reward upon graduation from high school -- a reward that connects schooling to postsecondary education or employment, together with supportive services.

Central actors in designing the Compact were key staff of a> national task force on youth employment. The economic boom occurring throughout the Greater Boston metropolitan area has fueled business activity in the Compact. Strong ties of Compact leaders with the office of Governor Dukakis and with the office of Secretary of Economic Development Evelyn Murphy have resulted in innovative uses of JTPA and other funds.

The Boston Compact cannot helpfully be encapsulated in phrases describing the collaborative relationships essentially as a trade-off, as in this excerpt: "participating businesses . . . give preference to qualified local high school students for entry-level jobs. In exchange, the partner schools . . . will try to prepare students better for work" (The New York Times, April 18, 1987). Levine (1983) states that "individuals create partnerships; institutions do not" (p. 15).

The Boston Compact has placed almost 3, 000 students in jobs and has met basic goals, such as increasing achievement scores, the number of graduates entering jobs or postsecondary education or training, and increasing attendance. The program has helped reduce the unemployment of black high school graduates by two percent (from 7 to 5 percent, versus a national rate of 50 percent). It is tempting to "replicate" the Compact because its goals are clear, its accomplishments are demonstrable, and the descriptions of the basic features of the Compact are generally understandable.

Yet unlike a number of partnerships based on selective program development or individual initiatives (what CED calls "civic entrepreneurs"), the central feature of the Compact is its process -- the special working relationships aimed at systemic change that are at the heart of communication among leaders in the various educative agencies of Boston.

National Alliance of Business Is Replicating the Compact

The National Alliance of Business (NAB) is promoting national replications of "bits and pieces" of the Compact concept in seven cities which have a record of successful public-private collaboration. The cities include Albuquerque, Cincinnati, Louisville, Memphis, Indianapolis, San Diego and Seattle.

In announcing the project, William H. Kolberg, NAB president, reported that the number of high school dropouts, currently estimated at a million per year, is growing so fast that one out of four students entering the ninth grade would not graduate and would face a lifetime of unemployment. "We cannot lose one quarter of each generation and be a well-functioning society," he said.

The NAB study predicts that although the labor market will continue to tighten through the year 2000, the opportunities for youth, especially minorities, to enter the mainstream workforce may not be realized. Most work will require abilities to read, write, compute, and to analyze. The growing mismatch between jobs and workers will reduce productivity and increase the structurally unemployable underclass.

The central feature of the NAB plan is a group of "career specialists" who identify entry level jobs and then match them with graduating seniors. The NAB strategy appears to be mainly programmatic -- an early stage of partnership development. It is too early by several years to determine whether the "bits and pieces" of the Compact concept can grow into a systemic approach to metropolitan-wide collaboration that will address issues of youth employability in ways that will improve the quality of resources for at-risk youth from nine to fifteen years of age.

Buffalo Work-Education Partnership

The Buffalo partnership is supported by a combination of funds from JTPA, private foundations, corporations, and the public schools. It was developed as part of a consortium of 21 demonstration projects in work-education partnerships funded by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation beginning in 1979. The programs provide pre-employment skills, and on-the-job training for disadvantaged youth. A major feature of the collaboration between school and business people is that the subject matter curricula are closely tied to realities of jobs in the primary rather than the secondary labor market. That is, the programs "seek to create job opportunities for disadvantaged high school students that are substantial -- not single dimensional -- and have long term training opportunities and employment potential (Employment and Training Reporter, 1985, p. 995).

Buffalo Is Not Boston

Marie Kaczmarek, staff member for the Buffalo Private Industry Council who has been involved for years in a successful partnership program, explained the reason for caution about jumping on the Boston Compact bandwagon. She pointed out that the Boston metropolitan community has been undergoing explosive economic expansion and that companies are literally begging for workers. Entry level wages are soaring, even for menial jobs, and young people have no trouble finding work. In the Buffalo area, however, there is high unemployment, and young people face strong competition from adults in the labor market -- displaced skilled workers and women entering or re-entering the workforce. The incentives for business and education to collaborate are therefore very different from those in the Boston area.

Nor does the Boston Compact claim to offer any prescription for confronting the problems of youngsters at risk. The challenge currently facing the Boston Compact is made clear in an analysis by Boston Public School officials that spells out in specific terms (to the credit of those officials) the shortcomings of existing policies and programs intended to serve at-risk children. One of the benefits of the strong national reputation developed by the Boston Compact is that top level school administrators can afford to allow public exposure to the problems that they face in fulfilling their long-range commitments. That analysis demonstrates that the expectations generated by policy take more time to realize and are more complex than planners anticipated.

Ogilvy and Mather's Graphic Arts Partnership in Chicago

The Ogilvy and Mather program at Chicago's Roberto Clemente High School is another imaginative and successful model that serves disadvantaged youngsters very well. Equally important, however, is the understanding that its successes took a long time and considerable effort and talent to accomplish, and its replication would have failed completely in New York City if luck had not intervened. The program was designed to recruit and train minority high school students for relatively lucrative jobs in the graphic arts industry -- positions with ample opportunity for advancement, especially in an area where there has been a dearth of minorities. Corporate long-term investments of resources, especially the personal commitments of supervisors and managers, were impressive. Other Chicago advertising companies and their suppliers joined to form a consortium called the Graphic Arts Council (Schilit and Lacey, 1982).

Successful Ogilvy and Mather Model Struggled to Survive in New York City

In New York City, site of the Ogilvy and Mather headquarters, the model that had proved itself for years at Chicago's Roberto Clemente High School, at the top levels of the Chicago Board of Education, and throughout the Chicago business community was treated like a meddlesome cousin from out of town. Indeed, overtures by Marcia Cooper, the vice president who had led the program in Chicago, were repeatedly rejected for reasons that had nothing to do with the unquestionable merits of the proposed program.

The obvious need for the program in New York City, together with its proven strengths, were anchored by promises of substantial resources and long-term commitments from key executives. Only as a result of changing political priorities at the Board of Education (the Chancellor resigned to accept a job with the New York City Partnership, an organization of business leaders) was the program accepted. Ogilvy and Mather is now paired with James Monroe High School, where it has succeeded (Lacey, 1983). It is now cited as a model within Join-A-School, a school-business partnership/"adopt-a-school" program operated by the New York City Board of Education in cooperation with the New York City Partnership, an organization of business leaders.

These brief reviews of often-cited examples could be expanded in considerable detail. They reinforce the central point that must be understood about any recommendation for priorities in coordinating resources around public-private collaboration on behalf of at-risk youngsters -- namely, the complexities of the proposed effort (Levine, 1983; Clark, 1987; Fosler and Berger, 1982; Institute for Educational Leadership, 1986; Lacey, Hahn and Kingsley, 1987).

Ralph Leach, who assessed the Clark Foundation's Work-Education Partnerships, has offered one of the most perceptive descriptions of the process:

> Work-education partnerships with short-run ability to improve a disadvantaged youngster's transition from school to job and long-run potential to effect enduring institutional change, unlike Topsy, do not just grow, even if seed be widely sown. Most ground must be prepared cautiously and well. Not all seeds will sprout, and some sprouts will wither despite assiduous cultivation. Sprouts that survive usually need lots of nurturing to reach full bloom (Leach, 1984, p.2).

THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF COLLABORATION

Phases of Public-Private Collaboration

After closely documenting and collectively analyzing the experiences of site coordinators in the eight metropolitan areas of the MetroLink project, the Institute for Educational Leadership identified five phases of public-private collaboration for human resource development:

(1) Community leaders from different sectors agree on needs to collaborate and create a structure for action.

(2) Leaders' commitment becomes visible as multi-sector activities, short-term and long-term are publicized. Depending on circumstances, public awareness of their commitment may grow swiftly or may take years to develop.

(3) Leaders agree that collaboration must confront long-range systemic problems, and they identify barriers to further collaboration.

(4) Leaders and their constituents sacrifice "turf," authority/power, resources, status, priorities and traditions in order to overcome barriers to collaboration.

(5) Long-range commitment of persons in leadership positions is assured, and authoritative structures for collaborative decisionmaking for long-range collaboration is assured (Institute for Educational Leadership, 1976, pp. vi-vii).

Issues and Trends in Partnership Development

The MetroLink coordinators also identified numerous common issues and trends arising from their collective experiences. Several of these bear heavily upon recommendations for concerted action to address the needs of children and youth at risk. For example:

- Many motivations combine to stimulate cross-sector cooperative activities. They reflect needs, expectations, and perceived self-interest. People and institutions are moved to collaborate by a common view of an important perceived need. It is when major participants have a common interest or goal and are struggling hard to overcome barriers to achieving the goal that collaboration is most likely to bring progress toward durable consensus for action.

- A "culture of collaboration" -- special ways of communicating, especially through widely-recognized and respected informal channels -- evolves during a project. Participants develop special ways of communicating, a history of relationships, and informal understandings that respect but extend beyond their formal roles and functions.

  Collaboration among people and institutions is a function of the personalities of the actors as well as other factors such as community priorities.

- Collaboration changes participants' viewpoints about roles, functions and capacities of other groups and individuals.

- Events of the "real world" affect structures, goals, objectives and processes of collaboration, positively and negatively. Those who facilitate collaboration must develop a range of strategies and tactics for communication, problem-solving and focusing attention on long-range aims.

- In order to pursue long-range goals over time, multi-sector collaborators must gradually cease to depend greatly upon individual leaders and must broaden the capacity and share legitimacy among organizations and institutions for assuming leadership and taking action to solve problems.

- Access to reliable information and the reporting of data are fast becoming critical issues for collaboration. Data about education/training institutions, practices and results are not politically neutral. They are often controversial, and their collection and dissemination may have many unexpected effects.

- Collaborators need to analyze the possible consequences of disseminating data-based information and think through the conditions for effective collaborative decisionmaking. Data-gathering and decisionmaking must be undertaken by the right figures and organizations, shared among

> participants and with the public at the right times, and by the right people.
>
> MetroLink coordinators found that one major task in collaborative efforts appears to be the development of compatible systems of gathering and sharing information -- systems that effectively communicate to all sectors (Institute for Educational Leadership, 1976, pp. viii - xiii).

The analysis by the Center for Human Resources, Brandeis University, of the 21 Clark Foundation Work-Education Partnerships identified four generic issues that consistently faced planners and implementers. Participants at every level struggled to resolve issues about project ownership, feasibility of goals and objectives, planning, and management within a changing environment (Lacey, Hahn and Kingsley, 1987).

These issues corresponded to developmental phases and themes identified by the coordinators in the MetroLink projects and are reflected in the CED case studies as well (Fosler and Berger, 1972).

Issues of ownership are clearly reflected in the experience of MetroLink. Collaboration must gradually cease to rely upon individual leaders. The process changes participants' viewpoints about the roles, functions and capacities of other groups and individuals.

The problem of feasibility is directly related to the needs, motivations, incentives and rewards of all prospective partners, together with external factors, such as the local economy and labor market.

Effective planning depends upon leaders' consensus about a clear need and an agreement to create a reliable structure for addressing it. Planning cannot be effective without explicit agreements about long-range systemic problems and a commitment to overcoming barriers to further collaboration. Otherwise, partnerships are bound to become superficial. More often than not, the steps required to overcome barriers to collaboration involve sacrifices of authority, power, resources, status, and traditional practices.

Finally, once public-private partnerships have begun, the management of operations to achieve goals must be capable of adjusting to a changing environment. The so-called real world of changing technology, politics, and other circumstances requires effective communication and methods of problem-solving among different organizations and institutions.

COORDINATING RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYABILITY

Linking Community Resources

The capacity of existing institutions and organizations to educate and train at-risk children and youth for long-term employability is generally underestimated. If community resources were coordinated, collectively they could address problems with at-risk young people that are currently considered primarily the responsibility of the schools.

Commenting on the relentless spate of reports critical of public schooling, Hodgkinson observed, "Schools are in pretty good shape . . . What's changed are people's expectations. Every ten or fifteen years, Americans say everything is awful, then turn around and set higher aspirations" (quoted in Cuervo, Lees and Lacey, 1984, p. 9). He made that observation partly as a way of drawing attention to the long-range perspective provided by the "demographics of education, kindergarten through graduate school." In describing the imperatives of human resource development nationally for the year 2000 and beyond, Hodgkinson (1985) claimed that all education at all levels has merged to become "all one system:"

> The rapid increase in minorities among the youth population is here to stay. . . The task will be not to lower the standards but to increase the effort. To do so will be to the direct benefit of all Americans, as a new generation of people become a part of our fabric, adding the high level of energy and creativity that has always been characteristic of groups who are making their way in America. Their numbers are now so large that if they do not succeed, all of us will have diminished futures. That is the new reality (p. 18).

This reality is clearest with at-risk children and youth from age nine to fifteen. The large numbers of people in this age group will comprise a major portion of the workforce in the coming decades -- yet the numbers of young people in America will decline precipitously. (Hodgkinson, 1985; Johnston, et. al., 1987). If American education and training institutions are all part of "one system," the priority must be to build the capacity of that system to assure that far greater percentages of young people succeed at whatever goal they choose. Hodgkinson explains:

> For the next fifteen years, at least, we will have to work harder with the limited number of young people we have to work with, whether we are in higher education, business or the military. If a young person fails the first time, we may have to help them succeed the

> second time rather than summarily replacing them. They will be scarce for a long time -- as long as we live, there will be more people over 65 than teen-agers in America. How do we balance the interests of both? (p. 18).

In the system of human resource development, coordination of education and training institutions and agencies within all sectors is essential. Success in one part of the system fundamentally affects all other parts. Since "certain parts of the profile of a dropout-prone student may be visible as early as third grade," it is actually in the self-interest of everyone throughout the "system" to collaborate not only toward prevention of failure, but toward creating maximum opportunities for success. Considering that the current cost of having a prisoner spend a year in a state penitentiary is about $25,000 (about a third of the cost of a year at a state college), "dealing with potential high school dropouts early may turn out to be one of the biggest bargains available" (p. 13).

More important, however, is a lack of understanding of the complexities of collaboration for human resource development and limited experience in managing them over time.

Most of the outstanding examples of community-wide collaboration around youth employment (both in-school and out-of-school youth) -- the Portland Investment, the Boston Compact, and programs in Hartford -- have evolved over several years through collaborative planning by leaders from all parts of the public and private sectors. These community-wide, long-range commitments must evolve from programmatic to systemic approaches to improving the system. Programmatic efforts to replicate specific components of the system are unlikely to alter the prevailing patterns affecting students at risk.

The most successful programs for youth at risk in these and other metropolitan areas combine several features. The various inventories of model approaches vary widely. They feature counseling, basic skills instruction, work experiences designed and operated jointly by school and business representatives, schools within schools, community-based alternatives for dropouts, programs for pregnant teenagers and teen parents, in-school suspension, intensive tutoring, summer and/or after-school recreation and enrichment programs, provision of social services. Among all of these alternatives, perhaps the most important characteristic is that students develop positive relationships with adults and benefit from meaningful role models.

Educational policies created and enforced at the state level often operate counter to those considered most appropriate at local levels. State mandates for higher educational standards operate counter to the priorities of local district and school building administrators and teachers seeking ways to create school conditions that would support the efforts of children at risk to succeed. As those in urban schools serving high percentages of children from low-income families will readily testify, they have enough trouble meeting very minimal standards (National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1985).

CED offers a broad recommendation for retention and re-entry of youth in the education and training system, warning that "this group is the most difficult for which to make generalized prescriptions."

CED recommends that:

> Programs targeted to students at risk of dropping out and those who have already left school should be carefully designed to meet the particular needs and deficiencies of these young people.
>
> Specifically, these programs should:
>
> o Combine work experience with education in basic skills.*
>
> o Operate in an alternative setting that focuses on improving motivation, skills, and self-esteem.
>
> o Provide continuity in funding and long-term evaluation of the success of the program and the progress of participants (p. 14).

* Donald Stewart, president of the College Board, added separately that "basic skills should include both educational and work skills. Work experience programs are excellent for providing training in the world of work. However, students should also have the opportunity to gain other skills that will give them an advantage on the job market..." (p. 84)

JTPA: An Underutilized Tool for Coordinating Resources

Coordination of public and private resources should exploit underutilized aspects of the Jobs Training and Partnership Act (JTPA). When the Act was passed in 1982, it expanded the role of the private industry councils (PICs), which were begun under CETA in 1978. JTPA was also designed to apply the lessons learned from the Youth Employment Demonstration Projects Act, an amendment under CETA.

PICs have responsibility for planning and oversight of programs, but neither the legislation itself nor JTPA regulations define the methods of designing, developing or disseminating programs for youth. Two aspects of

JTPA that offer special opportunities for flexible programming are Section 205 (Exemplary Youth Program models) and Section 123 (a) (1) ("eight percent" funds).

Section 205: Exemplary Youth Program Models

This provision enhances coordination of services for youth at risk. Specifically, Section 205 encourages programming based upon the knowledge gained in the demonstration and research projects supported between 1977 and 1982 under YEDPA. SDA program planners and administrators are invited to adapt models developed under YEDPA, using information gained chiefly through voluntary networking and technical assistance. A 1987 study by the National Association of Private Industry Councils (NAPIC) of utilization of these models reversed earlier conclusions derived from surveys and anecdotes, that exemplary program models were not being used and were creating difficulty for PICs and SDAs. Instead, NAPIC reached the following conclusion:

> A substantial number of PICs/SDAs are utilizing this option under Section 205 to operate legislatively defined program models. Yet we know from recent surveys that many localities are not meeting the legislative requirements to spend 40% of their Title II-A funds on youth. Can these models assist in correcting the "40% dilemma"? We believe these models can.
>
> . . . The law also provides an incentive for SDAs to operate such a program since all the costs may be charged to training. Given the cap on administrative and support service dollars, it was thought that this could be a great inducement to put into practice the knowledge we have developed over the years.
>
> . . . But a look at the numbers of young people being served and the program budgets would suggest that these programs constitute a small part of an SDA's overall youth strategy (p. 11).

The NAPIC analysis offers three possible reasons for the problem. First, because the goal for the exemplary models is not immediate placement, except for try-out employment, local planners intent on job placements may assign these strategies a lower priority. Second, legislation and written materials do not explain exactly how to operate a complex exemplary model, so SDAs may require technical assistance for practical, on-site program development. Finally, the incentive structure is poorly aimed because Section 204 allows all the program activities with fewer restrictions. The report responds:

> While this is true, the beauty of the exemplary models is that they describe how separate activities can be put together in a strategic fashion. When operated independently, this strategic framework may be lost. (p.12)

Pointing out that JTPA is still a relatively new system, NAPIC views the results as encouraging. Two recommendations that emerged from the study were:

> - Public policy makers must begin to focus the employment and training message on the development of the skills a young person needs to enter the labor force, not just on placement.
>
> - If legislation is going to mandate certain program designs, then appropriate support, through technical assistance and training must be provided nationally. (p. 12).

The survey confirmed that 77 percent of 219 agencies responding were operating at least one of the Exemplary Youth Employment Programs, with 37 percent of those that were not running the programs planning to do so. The programs included Pre-employment Skills Training, Education for Employment, School to Work Transition, and Entry Employment Experience.

Among these options, only Pre-employment Skills Training programs are geared to 14 and 15-year olds. These programs were being run by 70 percent of agencies responding to the survey; average client case loads doubled over a three-year period, from 99 to 201 per program.

The approximate number of clients served between PY 83 - PY 85 in Pre-employment Skills Training were:

o	PY 83:	100,000
o	PY 84	140,000
o	PY 85	200,000

These data offer encouragement that the knowledge gained from the experience of YEDPA can be extended to disadvantaged 14 and 15-year-olds. The vehicles for doing so clearly exist, together with the resources, especially in view of evidence that localities have trouble solving the "40% dilemma." All of the agencies that were planning to operate one or more exemplary model programs mentioned Pre-employment Skills Training. Part of the solution is to use JTPA funding in conjunction with other resources developed through partnerships (Lacey, Hahn and Kingsley, 1987).

A related strategy for utilizing a variety of resources for at-risk youngsters is available in Section 123 (a) (1), the so-called eight percent provision.

Section 123 (a) (1): Eight Percent Funds

Section 123 (a) (1) of JTPA authorizes Governors to provide eight percent of the total Title II-A allocation to a state education agency. Eighty percent of these funds (totalling 6.4 percent of the total Title II-A allocation) are assigned to programs created around written contracts between the state education agency, SDAs, and local education agencies (LEAs). These agreements define educational and job training services to be provided to eligible participants.

The remaining 20 percent of funds (totalling 1.6 percent of the total Title II-A allocation) may be used to support an array of activities to coordinate education and job training. Unlike the normal spending cap on JTPA spending (a maximum of 15 percent on administration and support services) there is no cap on the 20 percent allocation of eight percent funds for coordination, nor are there caps on the costs of training or support services. Furthermore, JTPA provides a "25 percent window" to encourage collaboration between government-funded job training programs and the education system. The "window" permits 25 percent of youth served in eight percent programs to fall outside the government criteria for economic disadvantaged family income.

There is a further incentive to multi-sector collaboration. All programs funded under the eight percent provision must obtain matching funds from non-JTPA sources. The requirement can be fulfilled in any number of ways, including use of other federal funds where permissible, use of other state funds, or local funds. Partnerships between schools/school systems and private businesses, for example, are able to increase available funding resources through the use of the JTPA eight percent provision.

The importance of the eight-percent provision is that innovative criteria for coordinating activities with programs and services in education and training can be established at the state level. Creative uses of these funds can be effectively directed toward at-risk youngsters between the ages of nine and fifteen. The eight percent set-aside for education offers a potentially valuable tool for coordinating services to serve young adolescents during the critically important time when youth at risk are most prone to drop out of school.

Eight percent funds support flexible structures for PICs and youth serving agencies to collaborate with educators. For instance, the provision would enable a state education agency to improve professional training or counseling related to economically disadvantaged children. Eight percent funds are clearly appropriate in school situations where collaboration is broadly intended to improve the employability of youth. The Compact Ventures program in Boston, which was designed essentially to improve the quality of the ninth grade experience for dropout-prone youth, is an example.

JTPA is conventionally viewed as an employment and training program, but it can also be used as an alternative educational program. JTPA is broadly intended to teach employability skills to disadvantaged people -- skills that include language, vocational, attitudinal, and other skills essential for unsubsidized employment. JTPA differs from traditional education principally by being closely tied to the local labor market and by targeting economically disadvantaged groups.

As an alternative educational strategy, JTPA draws upon and coordinates services from other institutions, such as schools and community colleges JTPA requires that local PICs and State Job Training Coordinating Councils include educators, such as representatives of public high schools, vocational schools, and/or colleges.

JTPA permits much flexibility in identifying target groups for use of eight percent funds. At the state level, joint planning among JTPA agencies and educational groups, such as community colleges, can coordinate services as well as determine groups to be served. With national attention directed to literacy and basic skills, PICs are increasingly considering in-school youth when planning how to allocate funds. In addition, school-business partnerships are optimally suited to use of eight percent funds because of the requirement to match funding and because of strong representation by the business community and of education institutions on local PICs.

The 20 percent funds to assist coordination -- particularly the development of effective working relationships among state and local agencies -- are sufficiently flexible that they can be used innovatively. Rather than use these funds for administration, planners could deploy the funds to strengthen inter-agency ties. Funds could pay for improving management of training and supportive services; individualizing remedial instruction, assessment and counseling; and developing referral services to other community groups or agencies. Florida is using eight percent funds for computer assisted instruction and related matters to accomplish the goals of the 80 percent grant. (Center for Human Resources, 1985).

Coordination of JTPA and other resources -- state, federal, and local private as well as public funds -- is a more promising approach to building employability than the strategy created to be implemented entirely within schools -- career education. This approach, developed and promoted with federal funds in the 1970s, holds little strategic promise because it is isolated from decision makers in business and from workplaces themselves, and because it cannot compete against prevailing academic priorities within school buildings.

Career Education: A Lesson in the Need for Cross-Sector Planning

During the past three decades, vocational education and career education have directly resulted from interaction between educational and corporate decisionmakers attempting to define a common ground in the form of far-reaching policies and programs. Career education, a product of top-level collaboration between corporate and educational leaders about a decade ago, offers an object lesson in the need for cross-sector collaboration for youth employment, beginning in the middle grade years -- about age eleven or twelve.

Career education was top-down program of policies and programs, largely driven by U.S. Commissioner Sidney Marland, who had joined with business leaders to develop the basic principles when he was Superintendent of Schools in Pittsburgh. Career education attempted to strengthen the transition from school to work or postsecondary education by infusing career-related concepts throughout the curriculum at all levels.

Career education might be expected to build employability of children and youth at risk, beginning at age nine, using the curricula, instructional approaches and model programs developed and disseminated with federal funds during the late 1970s. Today, though, formal career education curricula are virtually moribund in the schools.

Career education was originally designed to enable teachers to adapt community resources for educational purposes. Unfortunately, few programs were designed as true collaborative efforts between the entire school and the business community, not to mention other potential partners, such as the employment and training community. Career education rarely operated as a partnership with a clear goal of strengthening the transition from school to long-term employability, including postsecondary education.

The strength of collaborative working relationships between business and school people at several levels in each organization is that curricula can be related directly to the world beyond school walls, especially for non-college-bound students (Lacey, Hahn and Kingsley, 1987). Without the benefit of strong working connections to the business community, school-based career educators taught curriculum isolated from concrete workplace realities -- the connections between school and work that would be most meaningful to adolescents at risk.

Formal career education declined steadily ever since its principal advocate, U.S. Commissioner Sidney Marland, lost the battle for federal funding. The fate of career education demonstrates the consequences of centralized policy-making that is not supported within the school community of professional educators and by business leaders, especially those who will rely upon the school to provide a pool of qualified young workers.

Even as late as 1980, career education curricula and instructional methods had not settled into any discernible pattern. Indeed, the approaches to employability for youth at risk that incorporated elements of career education succeeded mainly because of coordination between education and employment and training officials.

The most promising and effective efforts were the experiments developed under the 22 percent set-aside funds in CETA, which required collaborative planning by public school and government officials. Successful models developed in YEDPA resulted in strong relationships among local education officials and training organizations and are now incorporated in JTPA -- notably, pre-employment training programs for younger youth. Effective use of such funds depends upon collaborative planning and implementation of programs. Houston's Communities in Schools program, for instance, is essentially a public-private partnership which combines funding from the school system, private business and industry, and JTPA. JTPA funds support pre-employment training for at-risk middle school youngsters.

Why Formal Career Education Is Currently Neglected in Schools

Despite its potential value for children and youth at risk, career education falls outside the priorities and structure of today's public schools. It therefore does not matter that state and local policy makers claim that career skills are essential tools for survival in the contemporary marketplace, especially for youth at risk. Nor does it matter that goals of career education are commonly among the mandates of a state department of education or a school district.

Career education is supposed to be infused throughout curricula: elementary school curricula are supposed to instill "career awareness" of varied occupations; junior high and high school curricula are supposed to promote understanding of diverse career opportunities avenues for pursuing them. Nevertheless, the scholastic priorities of educators and the decision-making structure of public schools oppose these objectives.

Without special funding, strong administrative leadership and support among mainstream academic teachers, career education is ancillary. Furthermore, in the absence of strong working relationships with business people who perceive specific benefits from their support of career education, there is no community-based pressure to maintain programs.

The fundamental deficiency of career education was lack of coordination and endorsement at the level of individual schools and classroom teachers, as well as within the local business community. Career education could never compete successfully against longstanding vocational-technical and traditional academic programs. Today's heavy emphasis on basic academic skills for students at risk overwhelms career education within individual schools. The traditional curriculum claims top priority -- especially science and mathematics, the subjects in which American students fall far behind their international counterparts.

New Jersey's increased high school graduation requirements include an extra year each of math and science. Throughout the South, where critics leveled the harshest criticism of schools, changes are obvious. In 1980, ten of the fifteen member states on the Southern Regional Education Board required either no science or only one year of science for graduation. Now all fifteen states require at least two years of science, and several require three years.

Even business leaders advocate stiffer academic standards rather than formal career education. Their recommendations for educational reform have consistently emphasized academic, not vocational agendas. Claims on the limited time available during the school day to accomplish new goals practically forced career education out of the curriculum altogether. In most urban school systems, the typical school day is divided into seven periods. Some have only six periods. In addition, not only are today's students concentrating increasingly upon academic courses required for graduation; many of them are taking compensatory education courses for no credit as well.

The New Middle School Curriculum in Rochester -- An Example:

> The new design for the middle school curriculum in the Rochester public school system addresses career education within the New York State Regents Action Plan covering units of study over two years in grades 7-8. Home and Career Skills replace home economics, adding .25 credits to the program. The total allocation is .75 credits out of 14.25 per year within a minimum of 180 minutes per week per year.
>
> A sample modular schedule for grade 8 shows Home and Career Studies offered in the last period on Tuesday (1:55-2:25), directly after Physical Education and just prior to final five-minute homeroom meeting. This is after a full day starting at 7:40, whose morning is divided into four periods of English, social studies, math and science, each period lasting between 45 minutes and one hour. After lunch (one hour) is a one-hour period of reading.

Career education is squeezed between basic skills and vocational education as the school's mission, academically and otherwise, becomes constricted by pressures for educational reform. Trends in response to the school reform movement increase the priority of traditional subject matter content over ancillary subjects.

Finally, counseling services to improve the connections between schools and employment are minimal even within the tight constraints of most school budgets. Howe and Edelman reported:

> Many parents, students, and advocates spoke with us about the failure of schools to provide job-related counseling, to help students identify their skills and interests, understand the job market, make short-run or long-range career plans, and review the needs of their own communities (1985, p. 57).

Guidance counselors traditionally see their role as working with individual students on future plans, especially if they are college-bound, and otherwise are preoccupied with crisis intervention, class-cutting/truancy, and miscellaneous administrative tasks. Yet if eight out of ten students will attempt to enter the workforce after graduation, counseling support services should be coordinated with academic curricula and instruction, in cooperation with local employers, so that the curriculum relates to workplace requirements.

Partnerships: The Logical Home for School-Based Career Education

Principals and business managers prefer to seize upon some distinctive theme that will have fairly high visibility and measurable results for the school and business. The current impetus toward partnership development is rooted historically in the shifting concerns in the business community about the availability and characteristics of workers entering the labor market.

The current interest in partnerships between schools and private businesses is anchored in the same general concerns. Business leaders seek reliable, competent workers, and the schools harbor the pool of future workers. Therefore business seeks to influence the education and training of its future workforce. Business and industry stand to save substantial costs of entry level turnover, training and recruitment, supervision, and many hidden costs if entry level workers are well-prepared and motivated for employment.

The prominent involvement of CEOs in creating partnerships with schools and school systems largely reflects this priority. Timpane (1982) was among the first of several whose descriptive reviews of school-business partnerships underscored the commitment of the CEO and school principal or superintendent of schools as essential to successful project development. Meaningful innovation can take place only when commitment at the top of the school and the business hierarchies is visible at other levels.

There are three special advantages that partnerships bring to schools that serve disadvantaged youth. Firstly, partnerships reduce the traditional isolation of schools from the community. Secondly, collaboration enhances communication between schools and private sector organizations. Thirdly, this communication directly affects students by providing concrete links to workplace realities, including requirements and expectations.

As currently designed, many school-business partnerships center upon employment-based incentives and rewards for exemplary behavior, such as summer jobs or part-time jobs after school. Some programs include career exploration, especially employees who make motivational or informational speeches, and tours of company facilities.

Substantive partnerships would relieve schools of the primary responsibility for meeting career education goals at a time when school agendas and capacities are severely strained.

In order to transform career education into an agenda for partnerships, principals need to tell interested corporate executives that one of the best roles that they can play would be to share major responsibility with the school for developing career and workplace skills. In response, CEOs must be prepared to commit corporate resources, especially people, to incorporating career education for local students into the company's priorities.

Such arrangements would enable school administrators to use their staff more flexibly and would help companies that expect to employ local public school graduates.

An Exemplary Work-Education Partnership for Disadvantaged Youth

An example of the potential for integrating career education into successful partnerships is a project funded by the Clark Foundation -- Partners for Advancement of Electronics (PAE) at George Westinghouse Vocational-Technical High School in Brooklyn, NY. Conceived in 1978 as a way to build a pool of skilled young workers for jobs in demand for at least a decade, PAE won a presidential award for excellence in education in 1984 and has been replicated in several New York City high schools. The program was coordinated by the New York City PIC.

The PIC staff member who managed the planning and development of PAE was assigned to the Office of the Chancellor and approached the business community with his visible blessing. She recruited 45 companies and developed 200 jobs for 179 students. Recruitment of business partners required much face-to-face persuasion.

The PAE model joined line supervisors and managers of local electronics-related companies and school staff to upgrade curriculum, texts and teaching methods. Both groups stood to benefit from the jointly-designed model for training disadvantaged youth for jobs in demand. The PIC helped form a twelve-member corporate advisory committee of managers in large firms and owner-managers of small companies. The Council continues to market the program.

Over a period of eighteen months, company owner-managers, supervisors and technicians worked regularly with school staff to relate curriculum to current labor market needs, improve equipment and facilities, and develop ways to improve students' attitudes and work habits. Relationships developed around practical tasks requiring personal contact between partners at all levels. Line managers developed new respect for teachers and their students, and both teachers and students discarded many preconceptions about the types of companies their school served. Today, dozens of companies in the electronics industry in Brooklyn refer proudly to the Westinghouse PAE students their "farm team."

After the project was well-established, the principal retired, and a new principal was appointed at the same time a new Chancellor was chosen to run the New York Public Schools. The PIC staff position was eliminated, and PAE was assigned to the division that supervised all cooperative education programs city-wide -- a division which competed unsuccessfully with PAE for a White House award for educational excellence.

PAE had suddenly lost its top-level advocates within the school system, including job developers, because of intra-system rivalry. The low point came when Digital Corporation donated thousands of dollars of computer equipment to the school, and central board officials refused to approve the donation.

The PAE Council of industry executives and educators then took action to save the program, and succeeded in seizing administrative responsibility for the project, including job development, and hired the former PIC staff member as a permanent consultant to the project.

Career Education Revitalized through Collaborative Programs

Interviews conducted to identify programs geared to at-risk youth nine to fifteen showed that career education is commonly cited as a feature of exemplary programs linking basic skills, counseling services, and pre-employment skills training. Programs conducted outside of school, often during the summer months but increasingly during the rest of the year as well, link short-term intensive training to resources in the business community. Some of the most notable examples of career education, though, feature pre-employment skills training funded by JTPA. These programs are apparently well-coordinated and much better connected to receptive employers than were related programs in the late 1970s.

Some of these communities are large metropolitan areas -- Portland, Oregon; Boston, Massachusetts; Hartford, Connecticut; Houston, Texas; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Atlanta, Georgia. Others are very rural communities, such as San Jose County, Utah, which serves a dispersed Native American population.

SURVEY OF REPRESENTATIVE/EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES

The principal investigator and project staff examined education, training and employment programs around the country directed toward at-risk youngsters below the age of 16. In addition to school systems, foundations, corporations, universities and various resources known to the principal investigator, research staff made letter and telephone inquiries to the youth program managers of all Private Industry Councils nationwide. A brief letter to the youth program managers simply requested tips, called to a toll-free number, about programs worth investigating or people who ought to be called for further information (see appendix).

This strategy identified programs whose leaders or advocates sought to share or publicize, mainly because they were proud of them and thought that they deserved mention. While some of them were standard JTPA summer youth employment programs, usually there were noteworthy elements or references to other programs. For example, there were several references to the innovative use of JTPA eight percent funds to support computer-assisted instruction in basic skills to meet employability standards.

"Cold" inquiries made to school systems, agencies, SDA offices, etc., before PIC managers and others responded to the letter, confirmed that coordination of services is perceived to be important nationwide. With few exceptions, school system people (e.g., in offices of superintendents of schools) responded in one or more of three ways:

1. They knew of no special programs or policies designed to serve at-risk students below age 16, other than standard educational programs;
2. They thought that something ought to be done at an early age, but programs were geared to older youth;
3. Employment-related programs were restricted to youth 16 years of age or older.

On the whole, staff found that these responses indicated that administrators had not thought in depth about coordination of services for at-risk students but agreed in principle that early interventions should be attempted. A dozen or more of them requested information about promising or successful programs, including this report.

People in the employment and training community commonly stated that the responsibility for youngsters below the age of 16 lay with the schools. While a number of governmental and private agencies dealt with youth who had dropped out of school, rarely did anyone mention any significant programmatic links to the school system. With the exception of places where cross-sector collaboration was highly visible, such as Portland, Oregon, or Atlanta, Georgia, there was no reference to systemic approaches to coordinating resources related to education, training and employment for long-range planning for human resource development in the next decade and beyond.

Implications of the Survey

A review of the programs surveyed indicated the following:

- The general rationales for programs are standard to the point of being interchangeable.
- Many programs are dropout prevention or reclamation efforts aimed at students 14-15 years old, but some of them serve students as young as 11.
- Most programs have been conducted between three and five years. Some are new or only one year old.
- The standard design combines pre-employment classes, work and remediation.
- Pre-employment classes consist of social skills for the workplace, skills for seeking, getting and keeping jobs.
- Program funding usually includes JTPA Title II-B.
- Several respondents stated that they would prefer to serve younger disadvantaged youth but that government regulations prevent them from doing so.
- Dropout prevention programs are funded with state education funds.

- Program operators often expressed a sense of urgent concern about young people at risk, emphasizing that successful programs ought to be expanded and lessons shared broadly.

- The need for improved coordination of services among different agencies was sometimes noted, but school systems sometimes indicated that they could deal with problems without special assistance from outside agencies.

Practitioners felt generally optimistic about programs and strategies and suggested that remedies are probably available in their communities to deal with the causes of long-term structural unemployability. All told, interviewees recommended essentially that some group of leaders should consolidate and target resources knowledgeably, supported through adequate funding with minimal constraining regulations. Funding need not be massive or necessarily from public sources.

Respondents in JTPA or in school districts who were not involved in partnership efforts were generally unaware of resources for employability that serve youth below the age of 16. They tended to view dropout prevention as entirely the responsibility of the school system, and to view employment and training services as separate from the education system. Unless a major collaborative program was established, as in Atlanta or Portland or Hartford, the various components of the education, employment and training system were not linked. Even within public school systems, there is little coordination between middle/junior high schools and high schools.

Inquiries around the country revealed a surprising lack of specific knowledge about programs or resources for youngsters below the age of sixteen. Practitioners in youth programs tended to be absorbed with the concrete operational matters in their own programs. Often they had no ideas about younger youth or children at risk, nor did they have any suggestions about where one might find information.

Youth program administrators working with disadvantaged students in school and with employers felt that JTPA officials should treat school-age youth differently from "hard core" dropouts. Programs intended to serve youth at risk who are still in school should be designed and managed differently from standard "manpower" programs. While it is understandable that JTPA administrators should adhere to government regulations about family income eligibility, the manner by which individual youth are certified should be made as easy and comfortable as possible.

Finally, respondents thought that in order to serve youngsters who are severely at risk as early as possible, programs must be sufficiently diverse and knowledgeably designed to provide maximum options. Unfortunately, when at-risk youngsters are fourteen or fifteen years old, they often have so many problems that long-term developmental approaches are essential. Many are not served adequately under any programs, school-based or JTPA-based.

Respondents typically commented that program funding procedures should be flexible enough to address complex needs at the local level, and should take advantage of knowledge gained. There is a need for more effective networking and technical assistance to share information about promising practices and help practitioners pursue innovations. Planners and program operators tend to be skeptical of any model that smacks of panacea, yet they have a healthy respect for success with disadvantaged young people and are eager to take advantage of lessons learned by other practitioners.

The classic tension between schools and CETA agencies about family income eligibility arose repeatedly, despite more flexible regulations with the "25 percent window" provision in Section 205. School-based practitioners still feel that many youngsters at risk during the middle school years "fall through the cracks" caused by over-stringent regulations. Estimates of numbers of students from low-income families are typically derived from numbers of applications for free or reduced lunch. The figures are generally too low, however, because teenagers often refuse to apply for fear of being stigmatized. In addition, many of those who would surely qualify refuse to undergo the "hassle" of the income verification procedures.

MODEL PROGRAMS

The following programs were designed to serve disadvantaged young people between the ages of nine and fifteen. Some are nationally known but contain key features of several promising programs or practices. Some exemplify variations of characteristic approaches to serving young disadvantaged populations. All of these examples attempt to coordinate planning and management among participants in more than one sector.

Boston Employment Education Program (BEEP).

This program is coordinated by the Boston Employment Resource center, It is funded by the Massachusetts state department of education and the office of the mayor. It serves youth 14-17, most of whom are increasingly highly at risk. BEEP was developed as an umbrella structure under which a variety of youth-serving agencies could cooperate. Because of the high employment economy in the Boston metropolitan area, most of the clients who come to the agencies such as Jobs for Youth are increasingly "hard-core" cases.

The conventional approach that community-based organizations have used in serving youth is to conduct a preliminary diagnosis of the problem and provide a number of supportive services with a view toward helping the youth earn a General Equivalency Diploma and enter employment. But the extraordinary pressures on the labor market throughout the region have meant that most of the youth who were formerly clients of these agencies are employed. As a result, the agencies are having to prescribe approaches to their clients' many problems that often initially do not include alternative education or pre-employment training. Home visits, recreational services, job development and a great deal of intensive follow-up characterize these approaches to case management.

BEEP originated as a state-wide attempt to reduce competition for scarce resources among agencies. Planning and development of BEEP was difficult because the major participants were friends as well as avid competitors. Once BEEP was established, state officials directed the agencies to design programs to serve youth under age 16. The need was apparent because there were no services for 14-year-olds, and many youth needed immediate services. BEEP holds monthly board meetings that deal with approaches to serving younger clients.

Lehigh Valley, PA School-Based Intervention Teams

The Pennsylvania General Assembly, in House Bill 9, 1987, directed the Secretary of Education to initiate school dropout prevention programs. In response, the Lehigh Valley Private Industry Council has joined with the

Allentown and Bethlehem school districts to manage a summer career awareness program for a total of 350 disadvantaged 14-15 year-olds. After three years of success, the program, funded by JTPA Title II-B, has inspired the schools in the area to establish a dropout prevention program for students under 14, funded by state educational funds. School-based intervention teams are composed of parents, teachers and counselors. The teams determine how each district will deploy funds for dropout prevention, according to specific needs as determined by the teams.

Allentown, PA: Pre-Employment Skills Training

The Allentown School District's 1987 summer Career Awareness/Employment Training Project incorporates a number of intensive components. All are taught by Allentown School District teachers and counselors. Pre-employment skills, Developmental Careers skills, and computer literacy classes are each conducted six periods per day, five days a week. A teacher-pupil ratio of 1:10 affords individual attention; each participant undergoes about 25 hours of instruction in each area. Math/science and Allied Health, the focus of career awareness, are taught through speaker presentations at workplaces, on field trips, or in classes to groups of 30 students.

Field trips, which are essential to the success of other components, are combined with speaker presentations. One instructor and one paraprofessional are provided for each 30 group of 30 students.

Sites in business and industry offer ample variety of exposure to diverse occupations and work environments, large, small and medium-sized. In addition to the familiar fast-food environment (McDonald's) participants are exposed to several complex corporate settings such as American Telephone and Telegraph Co., Western Electric, two banks and three department stores. They also pay visits to municipal agencies (the library and employment service) and to a funeral home, cable television station, and to the police department and armed forces offices.

Individual and group vocational evaluations are conducted daily by a certified diagnostician, once during the three-hour morning session, once during the afternoon. Individualized labs for special learning and mathematics are scheduled two days each week.

Self-exploration, discussions of personal values, and self-assessments of self-concepts enhance career decision-making and goal-setting.

Pre-employment skills training includes standard elements: job seeking, reinforced by role playing and practice; completion of job applications reflecting current skills and identification of potential references; effective resume preparation, emphasizing individual strengths; interview skills, including appropriate behavior and dress, typical questions asked by interviewers, post-interview behavior; and work attitudes and habits such as punctuality, diligence, honesty, responsibility, and ways to cope with stressful situations. Students are also exposed to work-related topics such as how to devise a budget, pay necessary bills, endorse and write checks.

Supportive services are central to the design of this program, particularly the social learning laboratory to develop appropriate communication and coping skills. The ten-session lab is conducted two days per week for informal groups of no more than ten participants in each session. A videotaped social skills instructional program complements small group discussions, speaker presentations and structured role play.

Bethlehem, PA: Successful Students' Partnership

The Bethlehem Area School District's Successful Students' Partnership is designed "to address local problems of 'at risk' alienated students who have dropped out, or who are in danger of dropping out of school." Recent data show that 173 students dropped out of an entering class of 994, a dropout rate of 17.4%, but "these figures do not address those students who are enrolled in already existing prevention programs, who 'disappear' upon transfer to another school district, who are 'contained' in in-school suspension programs or who re chronically absent."

The Bethlehem School District, using funds raised by the Bethlehem Rotary Club, conducted a feasibility study in 1981 to assess its need to coordinate the array of services available to Bethlehem youth. The Rotary study, together with 27 other reports evaluating youth services in the area, recommended establishment of a Cities in Schools program to serve at-risk students.

Cities in Schools

Cities in Schools (CIS) is a national, nonprofit corporation that has coordinated and delivered human services to at-risk students and their families for the past 10 years. CIS enlists appropriate governmental and private agencies to focus their services in the school rather than through fragmented activities conducted outside of the school environment. The program is dedicated to cost-efficient uses of recreational, social welfare, and similar existing resources intended to serve severely disadvantaged families. Its objectives are to improve school attendance; encourage positive personal, educational and social development and behavior, and improve attitudes and skills related to employment.

CIS has been established in over 20 cities around the country and promotes public-private partnerships, redeployment of agency staff to work directly with students in schools, and creation of small, manageable units within each school to assure constant support for each student at risk.

Perhaps the best-known example of CIS is Rich's Academy, an alternative high school of 110 students located in Rich's department store in downtown Atlanta. It is administered by Exodus, Inc., a nonprofit corporation in Atlanta. Using a model that has been refined in several school systems over the years, the staff teaches academic courses required by the school system and provides counseling and mutual support through "family groups" of about 20-30 students. The Academy program builds students' confidence and skills required to earn a diploma in innovative ways; for instance, Rich's employees volunteer time during working hours to tutor students and expose them to various jobs in the store. About 15 percent of the students return to the regular school. Superintendent of Schools Alonzo Crim has often praised the program by pointing out that if these students were not in the Academy there would be absolutely no hope of continuing their education. The graduation rate from the Academy itself is 70 percent.

Communities in Schools (also CIS) was once part of Cities in Schools; the Houston program began in 1979 in one school. Between 1979 an 1984 it expanded to 15 schools. Its founder and the state director of CIS, Jill Shaw, has been seeking to replicate the program state-wide. Since 1984, CIS programs have spread to Austin, San Antonio, Dallas and El Paso.

Communities in Schools is a model of collaborative program development. Shaw explains:

> The schools tend to be a closed system. By nature and history, school systems haven't let outsiders in. The private sector is the real selling point for Communities in Schools -- having a local advisory board made up of the power structure of the community is what leverages school support (NAB, May 87).

Project GROW: (Martinsburg, WV)

GROW stands for Guidance and Remediation for Occupations and The World of Work, and its name is apt, for it uses a developmental approach to training. This program serves a range of disadvantaged students, beginning with age 14 and reaching as high as age 21. Project GROW combines pre-employment activities (occupational information, personal understanding, job search techniques and career planning); remedial help in all subjects, especially reading, math and language; and computer skills.

All JTPA-funded participants learn to operate IBM personal computers in business and education. The program uses math, reading and language arts remediation software, based on results of the Test of Adult Basic

Education. Participants must demonstrate competency in pre-employment work/maturity skills through classroom work before being placed in work situations.

This complex effort, supported by JTPA Title II-A funds, is coordinated within a school system in close cooperation with the Governor's Office of Employment and Training. An advisory council plays a significant role. In its first school term of operation (1985-1986), GROW served 241 youth certified as economically disadvantaged.

The regional employment service office provided an employability advisor to serve the JTPA participants of two Middle Schools, while GROW served one middle school. May 1986 labor market data show unemployment of only 5.7 percent, about half of the average for the state. As a result, entry level positions are fairly available with many service businesses in the area.

The project focused on middle school students identified as potential dropouts. The Project concentrates on four major causes affecting potential dropouts, as defined by the literature in this field. They are internal blame or sense of personal inadequacy, the dropout culture (social relationships), social class position, and alienation toward school. Acting on the belief that family and community contribute greatly to these factors, the Project emphasizes establishment of close family connections with JTPA personnel in the school.

South Middle School operated a component for 35 14-15 year olds. The program director devoted extensive time to remediation, tutoring and advising of students. Several participants were placed into regular vocational programs, and one student was employed as a custodial assistant at the school when he turned 16. For other students, the transition to high school will be supported by the employability advisor at the new school.

GROW literature states that school officials attempt to intervene with students at risk at the earliest possible stages in the developmental school setting because "every student is a potential dropout." The West Virginia Legislature resolved

> . . . that each county Board of Education establish a research-based dropout prevention program with special attention given to early detection and remediation of high-risk students . . .

The Legislature also requested each county to establish alternative schools and re-entry programs for at-risk students.

School officials make a special point of the following suggestions about the effect of JTPA constraints and of the need for collaboration with the community beyond the school system, particularly the business community.

> . . . The serious problem of school dropouts in this county . . . does not have a simple solution, and JTPA monies have very limiting restrictions placed upon whom they may serve in the school community. Berkeley County has an excellent staff of pupil service professionals, and JTPA has now become integral to its function and delivery.
>
> The growing business community in this section of West Virginia must become more cognizant of the effect of the school dropout on the economic growth of this area. The beginnings of this cooperative effort have already been established, and further development is required to make progress.

Finally, Project leaders comment indirectly -- but the point is unmistakable and sharp -- on the potentially negative effects of hasty unrefined reforms in the educational system:

> . . . Part of these have resulted in stiffer academic requirements. This increase in the minimum graduation achievement expectations may prove to challenge the goal of the traditional high school diploma in years to come. It is our primary goal to continue to make the public school a rewarding experience for the disadvantaged students.

Family Life Education: Indianapolis, IN.

Preventive approaches to the problems of youngsters at risk often require political sophistication and enormous organizational efforts. The development of a family life education curriculum in Indianapolis, which would address many difficulties experienced by disadvantaged youngsters, is such a case.

The first lesson in political coordination is that the impetus for the planning and development of a curriculum came directly from the top of the school system. Specifically, the Indianapolis Board of School Commissioners required development of a comprehensive curriculum designed to "strengthen the wholesome attitudes and character of youth" and to contribute to the overall personal development of all youth. The potential controversies underlying these generalizations gain clarity in the statement of goals:

a. That youth feel secure and informed about their sexuality.

b. That youth feel secure about their ability to make effective and informed decisions about their relationships with others with abstinence from sexual intercourse encouraged as the most suitable choice for students.

c. That youth are prepared to recognize and responsibly carry out their roles as parents, community members and contributing, valuable citizens.

The Board addresses the underlying controversies directly, stating that the goals can be attained only through "competent teaching of curricular materials thoughtfully and sensitively selected...and that a prohibition upon the teaching of any particular subject ...is contrary to the best interests of youth who will be expected to function in a free society."

Parents and guardians are afforded the right to choose whether their child will participate in the program and are entitled to review teaching materials and curriculum guidelines.

The curriculum itself is not as significant as the membership of the core curriculum writing committee and the curriculum advisory committee. The list of names and organizations represented fills five of the ten pages in the document.

The Core Curriculum Writing Committee, chaired by a supervisor of physical education, health education and athletics, includes a professor of family life education and human sexuality, a coordinator from the county health department, a director in the Indiana State Board of Health, the executive director of the Social Health Association, a counselor for a school-based center for teen pregnancy, and the director of school and community relations for the public school system. Each name is accompanied by a phone number.

The list of advisory committee members is formidable indeed. Members range from professors of physiology at Ball State University, the Indianapolis Urban League, the American Civil Liberties Union, an AIDS Coordinator from a local clinic, the president of the Indianapolis Education Association, elementary, junior high, and high school principals, and teachers and parents representing every grade level.

Indianapolis has had a successful recent history of effective collaboration between the public and private sector, evident for example in its county-wide summer youth employment program, Partners 2000, led by the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee. Invest Indiana, a newly-begun replication of the Boston Compact, funded through a grant from the National Alliance of Business, together with JTPA and private sector funds, is the most recent extension of collaboration among public and private sector leaders. Invest Indiana is being designed to address problems of teen pregnancy, academic difficulties, and dropouts beginning with age 13.

The lines of communication among civic leaders in Indianapolis are strong and can be mobilized quickly and effectively on an informal basis. When the time comes for a formal announcement of something as potentially volatile as the family life curriculum, the foundations for a successful operation are firmly established.

Intercultural Development Research Association: San Antonio, TX.

This program, which has been serving 150 Mexican-American youth 11-15 and elementary students for the past three years, is funded by the school system and Coca Cola USA. Staff in the Association point out that many Hispanic youth are at risk at a very early age. The dropout rate among Hispanic students in San Antonio is extremely high, as it is nationwide. Three school districts in San Antonio are involved in the program; in the first year two districts used it.

The youth at risk are identified in middle school, based on poor academic performance, teacher evaluations, disciplinary referrals, and poor attendance. Elementary school students at risk are identified among those who do not advance a grade, whose academic skills and performance are deficient, and whose behavior and attendance records are poor. Association staff member Nekala Vazquez said, "These kids make an unconscious decision to drop out as early as kindergarten."

Cross-age tutoring has been a major feature of the program because it helps both tutors and the tutees. The vitality of the program comes from the relationships built between the younger and older students as both experience success. Middle and high school students tutor at risk elementary students for three to five hours each week and are paid minimum wage by Coca Cola. The first year of the program Coca Cola subsidized all costs; now the school system pays teachers and coordinators to run the program.

Surveys of participants confirm that attitudes change: students have more patience, can relate better with siblings, and understand what it is like to be a teacher.

The program also uses guest speakers from the community, including Hispanic role models who explain where they came from and what they have achieved in their lives. Field trips join tutors and the elementary children to help cement the relationship. A trip to the Coca Cola Bottling company shows students how the factory works and exposes them to a career option. The year ends with an awards banquet at a Mexican restaurant in the community.

Vazquez believes that the program has demonstrated its worth for all of the San Antonio school districts and is now working on an evaluation to help promote the concept city-wide.

Young Parents Program of Rhode Island: Newport, RI., and Murray-Wright High School Day-Care Center, Detroit, MI.

Teenage parenting and pregnancy centers are proliferating in response to the exploding rate of school dropouts due to pregnancy. Not many years ago, pregnant girls and teen parents typically had little or no choice but to drop out. The dropout statistic for this group that was commonly cited in 1975 was 80 percent. Alternative schools for pregnant teens began to spread after 1975. Two other responses to the phenomenon illustrate a nonprofit community-based approach and an innovation designed to operate within the school itself.

The Young Parents Program of Rhode Island, Inc. is noteworthy because it is a regional program whose founder and director, Agnes Curtis, has created and successfully disseminated a practical, how-to approach to setting up a comprehensive service program. It is comprehensive because it serves school-age pregnant and parenting women, young fathers, and their families in ten Rhode Island towns. All services are free to participants who are 19 or younger and lack a diploma. The program is funded by foundations and various regional charities, plus the state Department of Health.

The Young Parents Program (YPP) is a private, nonprofit agency whose program and approach are uncompromisingly positive. YPP "supports the belief that people have the potential for growth during all periods of their lives. Although an early pregnancy may create a crisis for the teenager and her family, it also presents an opportunity for the young woman to mature."

In 1975, when she established the program, Ms Curtis was coordinator of home and hospital teaching for the Newport School Department. The pilot program focused on six ninth grade students who were receiving home-bound tutoring. An analysis of barriers that hinder young mothers from completing their education highlighted housing, financial, filial and emotional needs, as well as a new set of responsibilities.

After reviewing programs around the country, a regional model for service delivery and coordination within an area of nine communities used a central office to monitor all pregnant adolescents. The office serves rural and urban populations ranging from 3,000 to 29,250, yielding about 60 pregnancies per year.

The model is described in a detailed guide covering broad concerns of philosophy, assumptions and adolescent development to lists of funding sources and sample forms for record keeping by case managers. The program's approach to outreach emphasizes coordination of services suited to the unique requirements of a given community. YPP stresses that services must be both accessible and inviting to adolescents who are often hesitant or afraid to seek advice.

In contrast to YPP is the school-based day care center for infants and toddlers that is located in Murray-Wright High School in Detroit. This is a year-long parenting education program that targets low-achieving teenage mothers eligible for AFDC -- a group which commonly drops out of school to perpetuate the cycle of poverty and dependency on welfare.

The program began in 1974 in recognition that the main barrier to completion of a high school education was day-care assistance. The center can accommodate 20 babies and toddlers, and there is a long waiting list of applicants. Despite the success of this program and a school dropout rate of at least 45 percent city-wide, Murray-Wright is the only school that offers day care.

The program has simple guidelines. AFDC-eligible mothers performing two years below grade level are allowed to drop off their children before the school day begins and leave them for the day. In the first year, the mothers take a parenting class. Participants are strongly encouraged to finish school and to avoid a repeat pregnancy. About half to three-quarters of the participants earn a diploma.

The center staff consists of a teacher, a full-time nurse, two paraprofessionals and a number of student volunteers. The funding for the center, which is formally part of the Home Economics and Vocational Education Division of the high school, illustrates coordination of resources from public education and social service systems. Funding is provided by school district, Chapter 1 compensatory education funds, and state social service funds.

Boston's Plan For At-Risk Youth

The Boston public school system has gained national prominence through its agreement called The Boston Compact. This contract with the larger community of business and industry, and higher education, has taken a major step toward addressing persistent difficulties youth at risk. Extending the collaborative approaches developed through the Compact, the school system has identified six problems to be addressed by the entire Boston community:

1. Large numbers of students are achieving at a level that puts them at risk of failing curriculum and promotion requirements.

Most students who complete 12th grade still read at a level well below grade level.

2. Boston Public School students are dropping out of high school before graduation at an alarming rate. The dropout rate for the class of 1985 was 43.6 percent. In actual numbers the school system lost 3,498 students in the school year ending in 1985; yet only 2,978 students were in the graduating class. This figure excludes students with chronically low attendance who were still maintained on the enrollment lists because of occasional attendance.

3. There is a disturbing downturn in the performance of a large subgroup of students in the upper elementary and middle school grades, and the gap between these underachieving students and their peers widens each year.

4. The school system's promotion policy was implemented without sufficient resources or a coherent operational plan to meet the remedial needs precipitated by the establishment of standards.

While the School Committee rejected the punitive approach to retention, promising follow-up services, smaller classes, and varied instructional approaches, resources were not committed to bring meaningful remediation to students at risk.

In addition, it is impossible to deliver on the commitments for qualitatively different instruction and smaller classes at every level, especially in small elementary schools.

5. There are insufficient alternative education opportunities in the community to meet the needs of young people who have already dropped out of school.

6. Supportive services to address the social and developmental needs of disadvantaged youth, both in and out of school, are seriously inadequate.

The significance of this list of problems is that it could probably be written for any urban school system in the country. Except for specific dropout figures, which of the six priorities is unique to the Boston schools, or even unusual for urban school systems? The Boston Compact is now so well-known that other school systems are seeking to emulate it under the auspices of National Alliance of Business planning grants. Yet the Compact leaders are not resting on their laurels and devoting their attention to spreading the good word. Instead, they are re-directing their attention to persistent obstacles to educational equity and excellence.

The specific details of a plan for addressing these problems are therefore far less important than the broad commitment to publicize these problems and to renew the call for community-wide collaboration for educational reform that would assure long-term participation in the economic mainstream on the part of all Boston children.

A Paradoxical Innovation: Accelerate Instruction for the Educationally Disadvantaged

A provocative, even radical approach to educating children at risk stands a time-honored assumption on its head. Instead of slowing down and simplifying instruction for educationally disadvantaged children, the Accelerated Schools Project speeds up and enriches it. The concept is being developed by Henry Levin, an economist who has specialized in analyzing educational costs and benefits. He is applying his tools to educating disadvantaged elementary school youngsters. Accelerated schools are intended as transitional elementary schools. They would prepare educationally disadvantaged elementary school children to enter seventh grade fully capable of benefiting from mainstream secondary school instruction.

The innovation, which has begun in two schools in San Francisco and Redwood City, California, is based at the Center for Educational Research (CERAS) at Stanford University. Although the experiments are barely a year old, attempts are already underway to spread the idea in school districts nationwide through government-funded regional educational laboratories and with support from private foundations and school districts. The Equal Opportunity Division of The Rockefeller Foundation awarded CERAS a grant of nearly $100,000 for a conference on use of the model.

CERAS staff have produced a handbook on the approach called "Teaming for Excellence." The handbook adapts materials from the Hewlett-Packard Corporation, based on the research and practice of Dr. Carl Rogers. The Project includes research, evaluation, a newsletter, conferences, training, exemplary practices in pilot schools, and work with a limited number of specific schools while pursuing an overall goal of decentralizing the embryonic Accelerated Schools Movement.

Accelerated schooling is a dropout prevention strategy because it is designed to eliminate the most important single cause of dropping out, serious achievement deficits. In addition, the approach is intended to minimize teenage pregnancy and drug abuse, which are also associated with persistent academic failure.

One of the most attractive features of the approach is major cost savings at the secondary level. Moreover, the approach does not depend upon federal leadership or funding. The idea is attractive to top leadership in the teachers' unions, and the potential exists for the spread of a major educational movement to assure the success in secondary school of disadvantaged elementary school-age children.

High Expectations: From the Slow Lane to the Fast Track

Pointing out that such methods as those associated with Maria Montessori were originally intended for disadvantaged students, Levin has identified a range of potentially effective approaches which could be coordinated through Accelerated Schools organized around school-based decision-making.

The concept is that disadvantaged children must learn at a faster rate than other children to close the gap in achievement. The traditional and practically universal approach to education of children at risk is remedial and compensatory. The usual strategy is to slow the pace of instruction and to emphasize repetition, drill and practice, to place minimal demands on students' performance and to communicate minimal expectations of academic achievement. The snail's-pace, deadly-dull remedial approaches are based on the belief that these students must learn the mechanics of walking before being exposed to the joys of running with challenging ideas.

"This approach appears to be both rational and compassionate, but it has exactly the opposite consequences," Dr. Levin said.

The traditional approach creates low expectations of learning and assigns the participants (both teachers and students) to low status in the school community. It is not designed to bring students to grade level within a specified time, nor are there incentives or strategies for integrating disadvantaged students into the mainstream of high academic achievers and their teachers.

In contrast, accelerated education is characterized by high expectations of performance, high regard for individual students, time tables and goals for reaching performance standards, and emphasis on active engagement of the interests of children. All of these elements combine into powerful motivation to master concepts, to analyze, to solve problems, and to apply learning to new situations (Levin, 1987).

Testimony cited in Howe and Edelman (1985) confirmed that abuses of tracking and ability grouping constitute a major barrier to the education of children at risk. The quality of education within a single school tends to favor children in higher ability groups, and these groups stay fixed.

> Sorting practices begin as early as first grade. By third grade, the groups tend to remain fixed; shifts are relatively rare. John Goodlad points out in his thorough appraisal of tracking:
>
> "One of the reasons for this stability in group membership is that the work of upper and lower groups becomes more sharply differentiated with each passing day. Since those comprising each group are taught as a group most of the time, it is difficult for any one child to move ahead and catch up with children in a more advanced group. . . It is not uncommon for a child in the most advanced group to have progressed five times as fast as a child in the least advanced group over the course of a year."
>
> Furthermore, as Goodlad points out, students placed in slower groups not only advance more slowly, but also develop problems of "lower self-esteem, more school misconduct, higher drop-out rates, and higher delinquency." When students are placed in classes of mixed ability and achievement, they are exposed to more effective instructional practices and they like their experiences more than students in lower tracks (pp. 43, 44).

Collaborative School-Based Decision-Making Essential

The strategy of acceleration also reverses the usual pattern of decision-making in the school as well as curricula and instructional methods. Levin argues that prevailing circumstances in schools mean that most decisions are made "by persons or groups in the central school bureaucracy who rarely have contact with students or educational activities" (Levin, 1987). The accelerated approach is collaborative rather than top-down. Educators who are directly in contact with the children make the decisions that largely determine the educational experience of the child.

The purpose of shifting responsibility for decision-making to individual schools is to make teaching more effective. Currently, central office personnel are responsible for activities in planning, design and evaluation, and professional teachers are expected to implement policies. Dr. Levin says that there are three dangers to this prevailing system: First, uniform policies ignore "the enormous variety of student needs and characteristics;" second, centralized decision-making removes the responsibility of outcomes from the school-based teachers and administrators; third, the talent of school-based people is underutilized because they have no part in formulating or evaluating the instructional policies.

Decentralized decision-making places responsibility in the hands of school-based teachers and administrators. The school's full capacity of talent is used to generate policies for meeting the educational needs of the actual students in those individual school settings. This school-based organizational model must meet four criteria: accountability; a wide scope of discretion over policies for grouping students, instructional strategies, curricula and materials; incentives (symbolic and intrinsic incentives as well as financial rewards); and information (Levin, 1987).

A steering committee, elected by all the teachers in the school, meets weekly; the principal serves ex officio and functions as a facilitator, instructional leader, and intermediary between the school and the school district. District professional educators provide technical assistance, information, and resources for staff development.

Strategies of Accelerated Instruction

A range of strategies are available for accelerated education; a review of the literature revealed 125 references, only one of which mentioned use with disadvantaged students. A caution about the use of accelerated learning methods is that teachers may uncritically accept and apply programs which purport to result in accelerated learning but have significant shortcomings. Four examples of accelerated approaches follow:

First, Mastery Learning is a model developed by Bloom at the University of Chicago. The model significantly reduces the amount of time required to learn by tailoring instruction to specific characteristics students and the level of subject matter content. Mastery Learning has been used in a number of school districts, and has not been restricted to advantaged students.

Second, Bereiter and Engelmann's pedagogical approach of teaching essential skills through associative learning techniques, such as loud and energetic, repetitive unison responses from students, all of which teachers judge as being either correct or incorrect.

Third, the methods of pre-school learning developed by the Better Baby Institute of Philadelphia emphasize "patterning," repetition of exercises for sequential development. The Institute claims that its approach can raise intelligence an average of fifty points and eliminate reading and learning problems by exposing children in their first three years to a program of instruction. Most of the teaching is done through flash cards, labeling of objects, drill and associative learning techniques.

Fourth, the methods used by the Remediation and Training Institute of Washington, D.C., in its Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP) are designed for disadvantaged youth and adults but could be adapted for younger populations. CCP enables thousands of participants to learn basic skills necessary to benefit from job training and is based on diagnosis and evaluation of competencies through more than 600 discrete competency tests. Individualized lessons using printed, audio-visual and computerized learning materials have been successful; participants gained over 2 grades in reading and 4 grades in mathematics for every 100 hours of instruction.

Potential Effectiveness of Accelerated Learning Approaches

There are many instructional designs and a substantial body of information about accelerated instruction and learning which could be adapted to children at risk. Each of the four approaches has strengths and weaknesses; some are quite controversial. Many of them have been tried out in schools and school districts. What distinguishes the CERAS approach is that decisions about the use of accelerated teaching and learning would be school-based.

The use of Mastery Learning is a prime example. Potential drawbacks of Mastery Learning are well-known. Testimony to the National Coalition of Advocates for Students (1985), cited the negative consequences of the Chicago Mastery Learning Reading (CMLR) program, which has been mandatory for all students, K-8. Promotion among elementary and middle school grades has depended inordinately upon performance on the CMLR tests covering a sequence of 273 separate "subskills." A teacher testified:

> Because CMLR is mandatory and accountability is emphasized with charts and reports about how many students have passed 80 percent of their tests, and because in many schools basal readers and other real books are in short supply, or even nonexistent, CMLR becomes the central part of the reading instruction, and children never get a chance to read real books. CMLR crowds out real reading (p. 48).

What is most significant here is not the criticism of the concept behind Mastery Learning, but its application. The problems were that the program was mandated, that teachers who were required to implement the policy had no say in formulating or evaluating it. Nor were they held responsible for its outcomes, positive or negative.

Many of the federal investments in innovation throughout the 1960s did not succeed primarily because they were centrally formulated and were not faithfully implemented at the level of school buildings and especially of classrooms. School-based educators, particularly teachers, were required to carry out directives that they neither understood nor had the skill to carry out with individual children (Berman and McLaughlin, 1975). Today, instead of helping students to read, write, and calculate, to think and solve problems creatively, the narrow, test-driven pedagogy and curriculum has the opposite effect.

The danger of mandated instructional policies from state and school district decision-makers, which could subvert the Accelerated Schools Movement in its infancy, is that the growing political importance of standardized testing results in primary emphasis placed on management and correlations to testing programs rather than on teaching and learning. The misuse of well-intentioned programs like Mastery Learning can counteract optimal educational experiences when carried out by teachers who do not fully understand or endorse the policy, and who are not supported in adapting the policy to needs of individual students.

Toward School-Based Decision-Making

The climate of policy making which supports such provocative notions as accelerated schooling for at-risk children grew out of the "effective schools" movement begun by the late Ronald Edmonds in the early 1980s. Mr. Edmonds defined the effective school as one in which the bottom quartile of the student body showed significant academic progress, at least as great as that of the rest of the students.

Mr. Edmonds claimed that schools, particularly those that serve children from low-income families, could improve significantly if they attended to five fundamental characteristics. He claimed that the attributes of effective school were:

- Clear school mission
- Monitoring of students' academic progress
- High expectations for student achievement
- A safe and orderly school climate
- A principal who is an instructional leader (Edmonds, 1980).

Since Edmonds' work, the list of attributes has been considerably expanded and enriched (Purkey and Smith, 1983). The "effective schools" movement has generated significantly increased expectations for elementary and middle/junior high schools, focusing upon the organizational characteristics of schools where disadvantaged children succeed.

Proponents of the "effective schools" movement claimed that public schools around the country could address the commitment to educational equity in a systematic fashion, applying specific principles of planning and program development derived from research. Edmonds summarized the vision by saying that "all children are educable;" however, "the degree to which their educability is realized is primarily determined by the characteristics of the school to which they go" (1980).

Edmonds maintained that the school must not be a "captive of the community." That is, neither the family nor the poverty of the community can be blamed for the failure of children to receive effective instruction in basic skills: "The school is powerful to deliver basic instruction... Regardless of how the family behaves, it is incumbent on the school as an institution to get the basic job done" (1980).

Perhaps the major contribution of the effective schools movement was to provide a scientifically-justified rationale for placing the authority and responsibility for instructional decision-making closer to educators in individual schools. The pressure to increase school-based teachers' and administrators' responsibility for outcomes was the claim that educators of disadvantaged children could not shift the burden of teaching and learning of basic skills outside of the individual school. A crucial concept underlying the crucial organizational factor in transforming American schooling for children at risk is gaining acceptance -- namely, the claim that school-based decision-makers can make schools instructionally effective for educationally disadvantaged students.

The claim that all schools are capable of teaching basic academic skills to all youngsters at risk -- particularly those just entering adolescence -- is based on limited and flawed research, but the extraordinary vision has been inspiring to those who have accepted the call to "turn schools around." Several have apparently have done so. The premise of Edmonds' vision, though, was that the school must perform the educational job alone -- that is, independent of uncontrollable external factors such as the business community, health and human service agencies, parents, opportunities for community service, JTPA funding and training expertise, and materials, much less incentives and supports such as I Have A Dream.

Schools are indeed more powerful and resilient than most people realize. Their problem is that they and the disadvantaged children and youth that they serve are traditionally isolated from community resources and are unsuited to taking the lead in building relationships beyond their walls. The leaders of other educative agencies in the community must therefore assume responsibility to take the initiative. A group including educational officials must create and collaboratively manage structures to consolidate and coordinate all available resources that they can muster in order to support youth at risk, nine to fifteen, day-to-day, year-around, over time, until they are safely in secondary school and on the road to employability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Building the Water Table for Employability

This analysis concludes with a return to the metaphor of water. Public attention to issues affecting children and youth at risk must evolve from an influx of resources and a proliferation of untested policies and programs toward systemic approaches to human resource development for disadvantaged youth. The ultimate goal is to build the water table of supports for youngsters at risk through the elementary and middle school years. During the dry spells it will be necessary to draw upon that water table, to sink wells to address special needs.

The following eight recommendations are offered to guide the needed confluence of public and private resources, for a reliable support system. Once the water table is sound, disadvantaged youth can enter mainstream high school programs with skill and confidence as they begin formal preparation for employability and lifelong learning.

Recommendation 1.

Program planners should concentrate on building leadership and social skills among middle grade students, particularly at age 11 and 12, which are essential for employability and for academic success. Programs in every organization and institution that deals with these youngsters should be designed and staffed to support youngsters in learning to apply effective problem-solving skills and strategies in diverse situations -- school, recreation, community service, family, workplaces.

Public-private partnership program planners should pay special attention to supportive programs for middle school youngsters at risk. Recreational and social programs, tutoring by employees, summer programs, pre-employment skills training, exposure to career opportunities, and provision of special incentives and rewards for attendance and satisfactory performance are all helpful.

Recommendation 2.

Adult participants in programs involving young adolescents should be trained to understand the dynamics of early adolescent development and multicultural factors in attitudes and behavior. Education and training should be provided to educators as well as to parents, social service personnel, employees in businesses, and managers of employment and training programs.

Management of programs involving middle grade youngsters at risk should be designed around special developmental needs of this group. The principles of discipline developed in the Rochester, NY school district and promoted by the Center for Early Adolescence are exemplary (Dorman, 1987; Lipsitz, 1986).

Recommendation 3.

Children and youth at risk should be provided with a wide array of supportive services and should be provided opportunities to provide services to others as well. School-based community service programs, social service agencies, and corporate social service programs should be expanded to target this age group in close coordination with teachers and counselors.

The Houston Communities in Schools program is a good example of how an administratively cumbersome idea for coordinating services (the national Cities in Schools program) evolved into an intermediary institution for city-wide, systemic collaboration for youngsters at risk.

Recommendation 4.

Public school systems that serve high concentrations of children and youth at risk should create policies that encourage maximum flexibility and responsibility for decision-making at the school building level. Above all, teachers should be provided time and resources for their own development and for planning and monitoring their work with at-risk youngsters.

The new teachers' contract negotiated in New York City offers a local example of how school practitioners can be encouraged to become involved in formulating instructional and other policies affecting the quality of educational services in their own buildings. The new contract stipulates that if 75 percent of the teachers of a given school vote to operate programs outside the conventional rules determined by central authorities, then those rules can be waived. Specific processes for modifying the regulations to encourage school-based decision-making are currently being refined.

Recommendation 5.

Creative uses of JTPA funds (section 205 and the eight-percent provision) should be encouraged and expanded through intensive collaboration between JTPA and school officials. Collaborative activities should be designed to involve practitioners who deal directly with the at-risk youth themselves.

State officials should regularly convene groups of public-private sector planners, especially those that include the business community, to identify receptive Private Industry Councils, school systems, and individual school staffs that serve at-risk youngsters to conduct comprehensive planning and program development.

Recommendation 6.

Title II-B funds that are currently restricted to summer employment should be made available to provide remediation and support services for the full year. Many promising programs for at-risk youth conducted with JTPA funds must cease or be privately funded as soon as the youth return to school. A matching funding requirement, as in the eight-percent provision, could be used to encourage collaborative planning and management of year-around programming.

Recommendation 7.

Leaders and staff planners of public-private collaboration must recognize and adapt to the extensive demands and complexities of partnerships aimed toward ambitious aims of human resource development, minority youth employment, and school improvement.

Successful city-wide collaborative programs dealing with the comprehensive system of education and training have grown over time in Portland, Oregon; Hartford, Connecticut, but their leaders repeatedly emphasize that collaboration is not easy. The Portland and Hartford efforts confirm the importance of intermediary structures to facilitate collaboration.

Provision of sufficient time and resources for planning is essential -- particularly time. Far too many partnership plans to assist disadvantaged groups are conceived unrealistically around overly-ambitious goals and objectives. Successful efforts start small and work out bugs before gradually expanding.

Collaborative inter-sector planning must involve lower-echelon people, such as teachers and PIC staff at the earliest stages possible. Trainers, counselors, JTPA intake interviewers, and others, such as corporate employees, who will have direct responsibility for implementing plans, must be engaged in the formulation of programs for at-risk youngsters.

Recommendation 8.

Programs should be conceived, developed and promoted around provision of maximum exposure to disadvantaged youngsters of options in careers, career paths, and lifetime learning. JTPA funding standards should not restrict participants in exemplary youth programs to students who seek immediate employment after graduation. Postsecondary education, including higher education, should be a legitimate option.

The Work-Education Partnerships funded by the Clark Foundation used JTPA funds, geared to employment after graduation. Project managers found that a surprising proportion of graduates entered postsecondary education, including four-year colleges. On the premise that disadvantaged youth should be aware of and be able to pursue a number of alternatives, programs that build employability skills should not communicate the message that higher education is a realistic option only for mainstream, economically advantaged students.

State initiatives like Ohio State University's Young Scholars Program should be encouraged but not confined to incentives to attend four-year accredited colleges. Innovative programs could also provide a combination of incentives, rewards, and supportive services for a range of post-secondary options.

Planning should be conducted collaboratively with those who work closely with the youngsters themselves, such as teachers and social service agency staff. Innovative programs resulting from such planning that would increase the long-term educational, training and employment options for disadvantaged youth should be able to draw upon JTPA funds.

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